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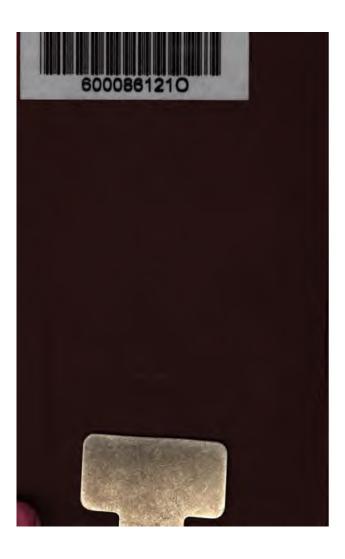
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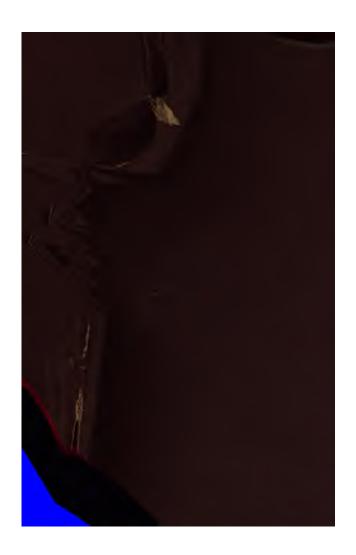
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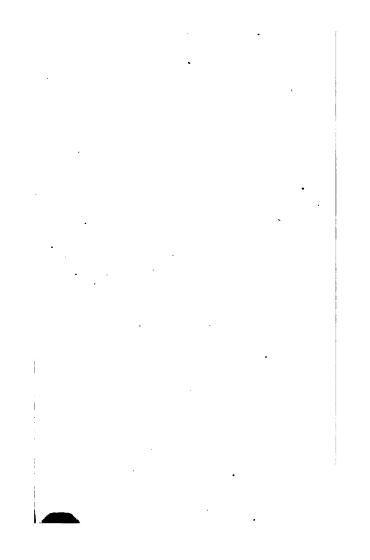












# SCRIPTURE IMAGERY.

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# SCRIPTURE IMAGERY.

BY

## PETER GRANT, D.D.,

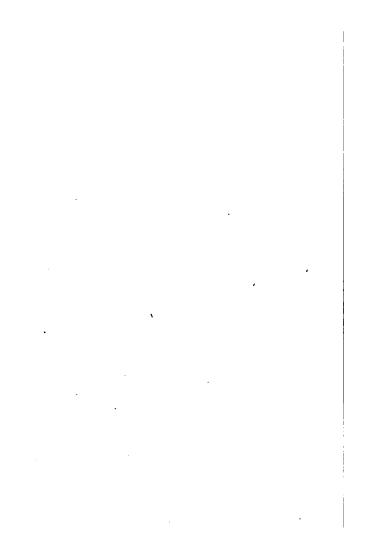
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"Christian Comfort," "Light on the Grave," and
"Direction in Prayer."



EDINBURGH:
WILLIAM P. NIMMO.
1868.

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## PREFACE.



HE present little volume has been prepared with the view of illustrating a few samples of the

beautiful and instructive imagery, of which there is such an inexhaustible store contained in Holy Writ. The author has been induced to submit it to the indulgent perusal of the Christian public, partly, by the marked favour with which a cognate work of his, entitled "Emblems of Jesus," has been received,—ten thousand copies having, within the last few years, been circulated, both in this coun-

try, and in the American continent; and partly, by the humble hope, that it may be instrumental in leading his readers to a fuller appreciation of the propriety, design, and beauty of Scripture metaphors in general, and to a closer and more habitual attention to those lessons of heavenly instruction and consolation, which they are so forcibly calculated to convey to the heart.

PERTH ROAD, DUNDEE, October 1868.

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## The Rain and the Snow.

#### DEUT. XXXII. 2.

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew: as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass."

#### Job xxxviii. 28.

"Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?"

#### Ps. lxxii, 6.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth."

#### JER. xiv. 22.

"Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou he, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast made all these things."

### HEB. vi. 7, 8.

"For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

#### z Cor. iii. 6.

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."

"From heaven descend the drops of dew,
From heaven the gracious showers;
Earth's winter aspect to renew,
And clothe the spring with flowers.
From heaven the beams of morning flow,
That melt the gloom of night;
From heaven the evening breezes blow,
Health, fragrance, and delight.

"As dew, and rain, and light, and air,
From heaven the Bible came,
The waste of nature to repair,
Kindle a sacred flame:
A flame to purify the earth,
Exalt her sons on high,
And train them for their second birth—
A birth beyond the sky,"

### Isa. lv. 10, 11.

"For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."



HE similitudes employed by the sacred wrifers, while fitted, by their inimitable beauty, to please the imagination, and gratify the

taste, are not less adapted to excite the attention, to enlighten the understanding, to impress the heart, and to fasten upon the memory. Borrowed, for the most part, from sources, with which we are perfectly familiar, the truth, which they are designed to convey, can scarcely fail to strike us at first sight, aided, as it is, by the illustration afforded. Many of them are drawn from the most common phenomena of the natural world, so that almost every object we behold,—above, be-

neath, or around us,—becomes a remembrancer of spiritual things. A better example of this is scarcely anywhere to be found than in the beautiful passage placed at the head of this chapter, wherein the prophet, in the name of the Almighty, institutes a comparison between the rain and the snow in the natural world, and the Word of the Gospel in the moral world. Let us proceed, then, to consider some of those particulars in which they are analogous.

The words of the prophet suggest that there is a resemblance in their origin, are the work of God. The rain and the snow come down from heaven-not merely from the aërial heavens, or atmosphere, but from the heaven of heavens, from the immediate presence of Him who rules the elements. He it is who "saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength;" and, according to His direction, they descend from the upper regions of the atmosphere, and do whatsoever He commands them upon the face of the world. In like manner, the Word of the Gospel cometh down from Him who is the giver of every good and every perfect gift,

Hence He styles it, "My Word, which goeth forth out of My mouth." It comes to us, it is true, in the language of men, but it is not on that account the less His Word. Although human in its vehicle, yet, in its nature and substance, it is wholly Divine. Accordingly, St Paul lays it down as the characteristic of "all scripture," that it "is given by inspiration of God," and the apostle Peter teaches us, that "prophecy came not by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." In proof of this testimony, we might refer to the seal which God has set upon the Scriptures-to the exact fulfilment of numerous prophecies recorded in them, and to the miracles by which the sacred writers authenticated their Divine commission, and established their authority and infallibility as teachers of Divine truth. We might refer with propriety, also, to their contents-to the sublimity of the doctrines taught in them; to the extent and purity of their precepts; to the majesty of their style; to the agreement of the different parts, and the scope of the whole; especially to the full discovery they make of the only way of man's salvation, together with their power to enlighten and sanctify the heart, and the accompanying witness of the Holy Spirit in believers. These, and many other circumstances which might easily be adduced, sufficiently prove that the Word of the Gospel, and the rain and the snow, in the natural world, have one and the same Author; they have a common origin in the counsels of Jehovah, and are under the immediate direction of His Providence. And they are proofs which, having undergone for centuries the most searching and scrutinising investigation, on the part both of the friends and the enemies of the Gospel, must now be gratefully considered by every Christian as constituting an impregnable basis for faith, and hope, and joy.

The words of the prophet suggest, that there is a resemblance in their object and end—that they may "give seed to the sower and bread to the eater." The fertility of the earth is dependent chiefly upon the rain and the snow wherewith it is watered. When the God of nature is pleased to withhold these influences, the most direful consequences speedily ensue. The whole vege-

table world is in danger of destruction; the fields and the meadows, which erewhile looked so verdant and lovely, become so parched and withered under the heat of the summer's sun, as to be little better than a barren waste, incapable of yielding food either for man or beast. But, when the rain and the snow revisit the earth, the suspended powers of vegetation revive, and all nature seems to exult in the beneficence of its omnipotent Author. Thus watered, the earth brings forth and buds, and ministers " seed to the sower and bread to the eater;" it secures to us an abundant supply both for our present sustenance, and for sowing in order to a future crop. Equally valuable, in the moral world, are the uses of the Word of God. Without it, every created soul is in danger of sinking in spiritual death. But when, accompanied by the influence of the Holy Spirit, it savingly operates upon the heart, it enriches it with all the fair and fragrant fruits of holiness, with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance." Then does the believer esteem it more than his necessary food, and it is unto him "the joy and rejoicing of his heart." It is found to be the only bread that can satisfy the hungerings of his soul. In the darkness of doubt and apprehension, it casts a gleam of heaven over his path. In the season of perplexity, he finds in it a counsellor who directs him with unering wisdom. In the struggle of temptation, and in the hour of affliction, it lifts up the voice of warning, encouragement, and comfort. It gives peace on earth, and secures eternal glory in heaven.

And as the husbandman is a sower, as well as an eater, so should it be with the believer. He receives the Word of God, not for the mere purpose of personal enjoyment and monopoly, but in trust for circulation and distribution, to the utmost possible extent of his ability and influence. Even as, in the natural world, there exists an established connexion between sowing and reaping; as without the labours of the husbandman, it would be utterly vain and presumptuous to look for a crop; so, in the moral world, the Word of the Gospel must be propagated through the instrumentality of human means and exertions. We shall reap only as we sow. If we desire the knowledge of the Lord to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, we must labour for that object. If we wish men to be saved, we must place the truth before them, and press its claims upon their consciences. For "how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

But the words of the prophet still farther suggest, that there is a resemblance in their manner of operation. The waters of heaven are made by God to fall "upon one city, and not upon another; one piece is rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rains not withers." And, in like manner, the Word of God is sent to one people, and not to another. One part of the moral world is fertilised and beautified by its influence, while another is visited with spiritual drought and famine. One spot is as a garden, producing abundance of the fruits of righteousness; while another is a wilderness, whence every vestige of beauty has departed, where everything seems sterile and unfruitful, or rather, where the poisonous fruits of iniquity everywhere abound and thrive with disastrous luxuriance.

The waters of heaven descend for the most part gradually. At times, indeed, they are discharged in torrents: but it is chiefly when the rain drops upon the pastures of the wilderness, and when it "cometh oft upon" the . earth, now a little and then a little, that its fertilising and fructifying influence is seen. So, too, in the moral world, the Word of God "drops as the rain, and distils as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." It produces its intended effects gradually. We presume not to say that this is always so. In the hand of Him who issues its commission, the Word may possibly come like the resistless torrent. sweeping before it every obstacle. Such results, however, may be as transient as they are sudden. Too frequently is it found that what rises like a torrent, subsides as a torrent. As in nature, the fruits of the earth come not to maturity all at once, but there is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;" so, in the spiritual world, the Word gradually and imperceptibly softens the heart, and renders it fruitful. At first, there is beheld the dawning, but the light which illumines the path of the just

"shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The waters of heaven produce their intended effects mysteriously. Although. through the influence of these great agents, "the corn springs up, yet we know not how, for the earth bringeth forth fruit of itself." So the operations and blessings of the Word of God are to us incomprehensible. We behold the result, but we are ignorant of the process by which it is attained. "No man," "it has been justly remarked, "can see the conversion of another, nor can well discern his own." Hence, in reference to the working of the Holy Spirit, whose sword or instrument the Word is, our blessed Saviour declares, "The wind bloweth where it listeth. and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

There is still another point of resemblance which the words of the prophet suggest, namely, the certainty of their success. This, indeed, is the chief circumstance they are intended to illustrate. "The rain and the snow," says Isaiah, "which come down from

heaven, return not thither;" that is, they do not return without first accomplishing all the purposes for which they have been sent. the Gospel is never spoken in vain. shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it," is the positive and merciful declaration of God himself. His word as certainly accomplishes that which He pleases, as the elements of nature, which cannot be controlled, produce with unvarying exactness, in another department of His dominion, the effect which He intends. The purposes of His grace are as sure as the operations of His providence. His counsels are unchangeable, and His omnipotence gives them effect. Though the waters of heaven often fall on barren rocks. or on arid sands, and thus appear to be in vain, yet it is not so in reality. God has some design in sending them thither, as really as when He causes them to fall upon the fruitful garden or the fertile field. In like manner, does the word of the Gospel frequently fall upon the ears of men apparently in vain. But, even with regard to the unbelieving and the wicked, it is not so; for if it be not a savour of life unto life, it will prove a savour of death unto death." Although at

present restricted to but a small part of the moral world, it is designed by its Author to become universal. In the eternal purpose of the Father, the uttermost parts of the earth are given to Christ for His inheritance. That purpose shall be fulfilled. Jesus will say with power to the "north, Give up; to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." And already the seeds of that precious harvest are sown; in many places, instead of the thorn has come up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar has come up the myrtle-tree; many barren and deadly wastes have been reclaimed from Satan's dark domain: and these are but pledges of the universal propagation of the knowledge of the truth and the blessings of the great salvation.

Be it ours to labour for the acceleration of this great era. Let us strive to support and maintain the Gospel where it is already established, and to extend its influence to those dark and miserable corners of the earth that are full of the habitations of cruelty and wickedness. And to zealous exertions let us join earnest and importunate prayers. For, though Paul may plant and Apollos water,

let us never forget, that it is God only who giveth the increase. Let, therefore, "our heart's desire and prayer to God," for the heathen, be, "that they may be saved." "For Zion's sake, let us not hold our peace, and for Jerusalem's sake, let us not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

"Thy Word, O Lord, like gentle dews, Falls soft on hearts that pine;
Lord to Thy garden ne'er refuse
This heavenly balm of Thine.
Water'd from Thee,
Let every tree
Bud forth and blossom to Thy praise,
And bear much fruit in after days.

"Thy Word is like a flaming sword,
A wedge that cleaveth stone;
Keen as a fire so burns Thy Word,
And pierceth flesh and bone.
Oh send it forth
O'er all the earth,
To shatter all the might of sin,
The darken'd heart to cleanse and win,

"Thy Word a wondrous guiding star, On pilgrim hearts doth rise, Leads to their Lord who dwell afar, And makes the simple wise. Let not its light
E'er sink in night,
But still in every spirit shine,
That none may miss Thy light divine."

Lyra Germanica,
By Catherine Winkworth.

- "The starry firmament on high,
  And all the glories of the sky,
  Yet shine not to Thy praise, O Lord,
  So brightly as Thy written Word;
  The hopes that holy Word supplies,
  Its truths Divine, and precepts wise,
  In each a heavenly beam I see,
  And every beam conducts to Thee,
- "When, taught by painful proof to know That all is vanity below,
  The sinner roams from comfort far,
  And looks in vain for sun or star;
  Soft gleaming then those lights Divine
  Through all the cheerless darkness shine,
  And sweetly to the ravish'd eye
  Disclose the Day-spring from on high.
- "The heart, in sensual fetters bound, And barren as the wintry ground, Confesses, Lord, Thy quickening ray; Thy Word can charm the spell away;

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With genial influence can beguile The frozen wilderness to smile; Bid living waters o'er it flow, And all be paradise below.

"Almighty Lord, the sun shall fail,
The moon forget her nightly tale,
And deepest silence hush on high
The radiant chorus of the sky;
But fix'd for everlasting years,
Unmoved amid the wreck of spheres,
Thy Word shall shine in cloudless day,
When heaven and earth have pass'd away."

SIR ROBERT GRANT.

## The Handful of Corn.

#### Isa. xxvii. 6.

44 He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."

### ISA. XXXV. I, 2.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It chall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

#### Isa. lx. 22.

"A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

#### DAN. ii. 45.

"Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

### MATT. xiii 31, 32.

"Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."

#### JOHN xii. 24.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

- "On the mountain's top appearing,
  Lo! the sacred herald stands,
  Welcome news to Zion bearing, &
  Zion long in hostile lands
  Mourning captive!
  God Himself shall loose thy bands,
- "Has thy night been long and mournful?
  Have thy friends unfaithful proved?
  Have thy foes been proud and scornful,
  By thy sighs and tears unmoved?
  Cease thy mourning!
  Zion still is well-beloved!
- "God, thy God, will now restore thee;
  He Himself appears thy friend;
  All thy foes shall flee before thee;
  Here their boasts and triumphs end:
  Great deliverance
  Zion's King youchsafe to send!
- "Enemies no more shall trouble;
  All thy wrongs shall be redress'd;
  For thy shame thou shalt have double,
  In thy Maker's favour bless'd;
  All thy conflicts
  End in everlasting rest!"

THOMAS KELLY.

### THE HANDFUL OF CORN.

#### Ps. lxxii. x6.

"There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."



N the kingdom of nature the greatest results frequently proceed from apparently the most insignificant beginnings. The oak, the pride

and glory of the forest, grows from a small acorn. The mighty river, which gradually expands its bosom towards the ocean, and incessantly pours into it the tribute of its many waters, springs at first from an insignificant rivulet. The wide-spread conflagration is often enkindled by a small spark. The philosopher, whose views extend from one end of nature to the other; the orator, on whose lips listening senates hang; and the hero who leads thousands on to victory, each

enters life at first as a "naked, helpless, weeping child."

So is it frequently seen, also, in the kingdom of providence. Out of events the most trivial have arisen consequences the most important. It seemed but a trifling circumstance, that Abram should be called to leave his native country, and to go he knew not whither; yet that was but the preliminary step to his becoming the father of a great nation, with whom God should enter into covenant, who should hold the deposit of the truth, and from the midst of whom should arise One in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. It appeared a small matter that Joseph should, in consequence of the envy and hatred of his brethren, be sold as a slave into the land of Egypt; yet that circumstance became the means of his elevation and their subjection, and led eventually to the preservation of the lives both of themselves and of the Egyptians. apparently but a trivial incident, that the daughter of Pharaoh should discover an ark of bulrushes floating on the waters of the Nile; yet the weeping babe who was found deposited therein, became the renowned leader and lawgiver of the children of Israel, and the instrument of bringing them out triumphantly from their bondage in Egypt.

In like manner, the Gospel, to which the Psalmist evidently refers in the passage placed at the head of this chapter, is described as small and insignificant in its commencement, but great and marvellous in its final increase.

The similitude employed to represent its commencement is that of "an handful of corn." This mode of describing its small and insignificant beginning is frequently employed in Scripture. In Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters it is set forth as a small stream, issuing from the sanctuary, which was at first so shallow that it reached only "to the ancles." In the vision of Nebuchadnezzar it is described as a little stone, cut out of the mountain, without hands. Himself, also, compares it to a grain of mustard-seed, which indeed is the least of all seeds, and to a single grain of wheat falling into the ground and appearing almost to perish. Now, in order to perceive the appropriateness of these similitudes, it is only necessary to reflect, for a moment, on the

circumstances in which the Author of the Gospel appeared to establish it, and on the station and number of those by whom it was at first embraced and promulgated.

To the eye of flesh, nothing could have been more unpromising than the commencement of the Gospel in Christ's own person. came into the world as a feeble infant, and was cradled in a manger at Bethlehem. The city of Nazareth, where He was brought up. was proverbially mean and despised. "Out of Nazareth," the common saying was, "cometh no good thing." His early years were spent in obscurity; and when, at length, He emerged from the bosom of His family, and entered upon His public ministry, He was despised and rejected of men. He appeared as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness." "He came unto His own, but His own received Him not." Falling at last into the hands of His enemies, He died the ignominious death of the Cross.

And who were the first preachers of the Gospel? A few publicans and fishermen, and others of the lowest class of the people, who, for the most part, were unlearned and

ignorant men. And how were they accoutred for their great enterprise? They went forth defenceless and unarmed, relying only on the power of God to bless their labours. In point of number, too, they were but an handful. Even when they were gathered together, after their Lord's ascension, the number of the disciples was only about an hundred and twenty. Such, and so few, were the agents employed in effecting the greatest revolution ever produced upon earth.

But the similitude employed by the Psalmist leads us to notice, also, the obstacles which the Gospel had to surmount. top of the mountains," where the handful of corn is said to be sown, is a situation of all others the most unfavourable. Not only would the soil there be likely to lack depth of earth, but the seed itself would be in danger of being blown away by the winds of heaven, or washed down by the teeming rain to the base beneath. In like manner, the Gospel in its first promulgation among men had many adverse influences to encounter. It had to contend against the whole current of religious opinions which then prevailed, and had become venerable by antiquity.

was promulgated, not in a rude and unlettered age, but at a time when Rome was in the zenith of her power, and when all the Grecian arts and sciences shone forth in their meridian glory. Its first movements drew down upon its promulgators the hottest persecution from all quarters. Interested priests and civil rulers, bigoted Jews and idolatrous mobs, all agreed in hating and opposing it. Its adherents were everywhere spoken against. Never, surely, was the seed of the truth cast in a more unkindly soil. Had it not possessed within itself the inextinguishable germ of a Divine life, it could not, at this early period of its history, have survived. Independently, however, of these open and violent forms of opposition which it had to surmount, the natural enmity of the human heart to its principles and aims would then, as now, present a most formidable obstacle to its progress. The heart, as unrenewed, dislikes spiritual truth. There is nothing in the Gospel at all congenial to it, On the contrary, they are in direct hostility to each other. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "The natural

man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

From this view of the Gospel in its commencement and difficulties, let us now turn our attention to the similitudes, under which . the Psalmist sets forth the glorious consummation which it is destined ultimately to attain. "The fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." This language conveys, first, the idea of marvellous increase. It represents an handful of corn in the earth on the top of a mountain, as yielding a crop so strong and thick that it would shake and wave in the wind like the cedars of Lebanon. Even so. in proportion to the smallness of its origin, shall be the greatness of the Gospel's final increase. To this truth, we have abundant testimony in various parts of Scripture. To the Son of Man there has been promised. "dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him," "He will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; so shall men fear

the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun." "It is a light thing, that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." Accordingly, when Christ Himself came into the world, He stated this grand fact as to the extent of His mercy, "Many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." He informed His disciples, that "the Gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations," while the commission which He gave them was unrestricted and universal in its extent. "Go ye into all the world," said He, "and preach the Gospel to every creature." In obedience to this command, they preached salvation through His name indiscriminately to every people to whom they had access. "Their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world." After the seed was once cast into the earth, the progress of the Gospel was great, steady, and continuous. "The word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Terusalem greatly." On the day of Pentecost alone there were added to the Church about three thousand souls. From that period "the churches were established in the faith, and increased in number daily." In a short time, Jesus Christ had disciples and churches not only in Judea, but in Syria, Phenicia, Mesopotamia, Arabia, the countries of Asia Minor. Greece, Macedonia, Italy, Egypt, and as far as Ethiopia. In spite of all opposition, and every species of discouragement, the Gospel gradually spread and increased. In a few hundred years, it had overrun the whole civilised world, being professed by nearly all Europe, by a great part of Asia, and by the whole northern part of Africa. the very means employed to arrest its progress were made by God the means of advancing it. The winds of persecution scattered the seed, and were instrumental in casting it into soil where, otherwise, it might not have been sown for ages. "They that were scattered abroad, went everywhere, preaching the word." Thus, from an handful of corn on the top of the mountains, there was produced

fruit, in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundredfold.

Since these first ages, the Gospel has been propagated with greater or less rapidity: but the prophecy before us is not yet exhausted. For, although Christianity is undoubtedly more widely diffused at present, than in any preceding period, yet there are many waste places of the earth which have still to be reclaimed. A day, however, shall yet come when God "shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit." The stone cut out without hands shall become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. The seed of the Gospel, though scattered on the most barren and unpromising spots, shall produce an abundant harvest of souls to Christ: for the Spirit of the Lord shall cause it to grow; "the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth."

In referring to the extent to which the Gospel shall be diffused in the latter day, we cannot forbear introducing another fact, which we conceive to be implied in this similitude of the Psalmist, namely, that this diffusion will be characterised by great and extraordinary rapidity. The "grass of the earth" is in Oriental countries remarkably speedy in its growth; so will it be with the final triumphs of the Gospel. It shall then be fulfilled which is written by the evangelical prophet, "a nation shall be born at once, and the earth made to bring forth in one day." It shall be as though a whole nation, instead of being matured gradually, and by a long process of years, should in a moment start into existence, and stand before the world mature in its laws, its civil institutions, and in all that constitutes greatness: or as though the earth, after the desolations of winter, or of long-continued drought. should, in a single day, be covered with its luxuriant and beautiful productions.

But this metaphorical representation of the Psalmist is intended to intimate, also, that the propagation of the Gospel shall be productive of happiness and joy to the world. It conveys the idea that, just such a change as, in the physical world, is made when the sterile mountain-top is converted into the garden of the Lord, will be that which will

ensue in the moral world by the agency of the Gospel, when it shall be felt in its legitimate power. It will be productive not only of fertility, but of amelioration and blessing. Not seldom has it been represented, as exposing its votaries to much distress and sorrow. But every one who knows anything of its true nature, must be satisfied that its sole design is to promote the truest and most permanent happiness of mankind, and that its effects fully justify the title which the angel spirit gave, when it was announced in the Advent of its Founder, on the plains of Bethlehem-"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." This fact is presented to us in Scripture by imagery the most beautiful and affecting:-"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree. and instead of the briar shall come up the

Men shall beat their swords mvrtle-tree. into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Happy period! Zion shall put off her weeds, and be no more like a widow that sitteth solitarily. Her children shall be multiplied, and they shall walk in the truth, love as brethren, and their souls prosper and be in health.

"The groans of Nature in this nether world,
Which Heaven has heard for ages, have an end;
Foretold by prophets, and by poets sung,
Whose fire was kindled at the prophet's lamp,
The time of rest, the promised Sabbath comes.
O scenes! surpassing fable, and yet true—
Scenes of accomplished bliss, which who can see,
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refresh'd with foretaste of the joy?"

And now, having taken a brief glance at the import of the Psalmist's prophetic announcement, we observe, that the manner in which it has already been fulfilled is fitted to strengthen our faith in the Divine origin of the Gospel. We have seen that the means employed for its propagation, although most unlikely, in human estimation, to accomplish its purposes, were yet made instrumental in subverting the system of idolatry, and in bringing mankind from the worship of dumb idols to the service of the only living and true God. Truly, therefore, may we say, that if this counsel, or this work, had been of men, it must have come to nought. The astonishing success which accompanied it, in spite of so many disadvantages, can be reasonably ascribed to nothing else than the power of God attending the labours of the apostles. The treasure was put in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power might be seen to be of God, and not of men. "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised,

hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence."

This prophecy furnishes us, also, with an encouragement to persevere in our exertions for the universal propagation of the Gospel. Although it may be with us a "day of small things;" although the means we employ be feeble and small, and the obstacles we have to encounter be numerous and formidable. yet let us not give way to unbelieving doubts or fears. The Gospel, as we have seen, has already, according to the Divine prediction, extended its boundaries in spite of every opposition; it has surmounted, feeble as it seemed, every effort that was put forth to crush and destroy it; and, as it has prevailed, it will still prevail. Under the fostering care and mighty guardianship of its great Author, it will silently, but certainly, work its way through every barrier raised against its progress, and, at length, enrich the whole family of man with the knowledge and hopes of salvation. God "will work, and who shall let," that is, hinder "it?" "Before Him, every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked

## THE HANDFUL OF CORN.

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things shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." "The Lord shall make bare His holy arm in the eyes of all nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Let these glorious prospects strengthen our faith, and encourage our hearts, in evil days, when the godly man faileth, and the kingdom of darkness appears to prevail; and let them animate us to promote, by every means within our reach, the knowledge of the Gospel, and thus assist in sowing the seed, which shall, in due season, cover the moral waste with beauty, and bring forth those fruits of holiness which are, by Iesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God.

"Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
Great David's greater Son I
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To let the captive free,
To take away transgression,
And rule in equity.

"He comes with succour speedy, To those who suffer wrong; To help the poor and needy, And bid the weak be strong: To give them songs for sighing, Their darkness turn to light, Whose souls, condemn'd and dying, Were precious in His sight.

"He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth,
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth:
Before Him, on the mountains,
Shall peace, the herald, go,
And righteousness in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

"Arabia's desert-ranger
To Him shall bow the knee;
The Ethiopian stranger
His glory come to see:
With offerings of devotion
Ships from the Isles shall meet,
To pour the wealth of ocean
In tribute at His feet.

"Kings shall fall down before Him, And gold and incense bring; All nations shall adore Him, His praise all people sing; For He shall have dominion O'er river, sea, and shore; Far as the eagle's pinion, Or dove's light wing can soar.

"For Him shall prayer unceasing,
And daily vows ascend,
His kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end:

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The mountain-dews shall nourish
A seed, in weakness sown,
Whose fruit shall spread and flourish,
And shake like Lebanon.

"O'er every foe victorious,
He on His throne-shall rest,
From age to age more glorious,
All-blessing and all-blest;
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand for ever,
That Name to us is Love."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

# The River of Bladnegs.

### Ps. i. 3.

"And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water; that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

JER. xvii. 7, 8.

"Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is; for he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit."

### ISA. xli. 17, 18.

"When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I, the Lord, will hear them, I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

## John vii. 38.

"He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

### Rev. xxii. 1.

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb."

- "There is a River, deep and broad,
  Its course no mortal knows;
  It fills with joy the Church of God,
  And widens as it flows.
- "Clearer than crystal is the stream,
  And bright with endless day;
  The waves with every blessing teem,
  And life and health convey
- "Where'er they flow, contentions cease, And love and meckness reign; The Lord Himself commands the peace, And foes conspire in vain.
- "Along the shores, angelic bands
  Watch every moving wave;
  With holy joy their breast expands,
  When men the waters crave.
- "To them distressed souls repair,
  The Lord invites them nigh;
  They leave their cares and sorrows there,
  They drink, and never die.
- "Flow on, sweet Stream, more largely flow,
  The earth with glory fill;
  Flow on, till all the Saviour know,
  And all obey His will."

WILLIAM HURN.

## THE RIVER OF GLADNESS.

Ps. xlvi. 4.
"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God."



HETHER, as some suppose, there is here a primary reference to the Kedron, and Siloah's brook, by which Jerusalem was watered, it

is unnecessary to inquire, as we can be at no loss to understand the Psalmist's meaning. Water, in the various forms and aspects which it assumes in nature, is familiarly known to be a Scriptural similitude of the Holy Spirit. Thus, when we read in the Gospel according to Saint John, that, "in the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood, and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"-we find the evangelist going on to explain, "But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." Now, this explanation is no less

applicable to the words before us; and, accordingly, the Psalmist must be considered as alluding to "the river of the water of life" -the graces and consolations of the Holy Spirit of promise, which, in gentle and plenteous streams, pervade every part of the Church—the city of our God—and through the operation of which, the ordinances of the Gospel gladden the hearts of all believers. These benign influences of the Spirit are justly exhibited under the similitude of a river; and it is interesting and instructive to trace some of the more prominent points of analogy between them.

This similitude suggests the idea of fructifying influence. As a river greatly enriches and fertilises the soil upon its borders, even such is the influence of the river of God upon the soil of the human heart. Its natural condition may be fitly compared to a dry and barren wilderness; and, unless the streams of the spiritual river be made to flow forth upon it, it can never bring forth fruit unto God. But, let these hallowed streams be poured out, and what a glorious transformation immediately ensues! The wilderness becomes like a fruitful field, and the

desert resembles the garden of the Lord. The dry and sterile ground of the heart, receives within its moistened soil "the seed of the word," which takes root downward, and bears fruit upward, "some thirty, some sixty, some an hundred fold," to the glory and praise of God. Instead of the thorn, comes up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar, comes up the myrtle-tree; and that which was parched, and withered, and ready to die. "revives as the corn, and grows as the vine and the scent thereof is as the wine of Lebanon." Hence, in allusion to this fructifying influence of the river of God, the Psalmist declares concerning the man who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, but delighteth in the law of the Lord, that "he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

This similitude of a river is significant, also, of cleansing power. For, while fructify\_ ing the soil upon its borders, a river is, at the same time, adapted to remove all impurity from whatever is washed therein. In this respect, it illustrates the sanctifying influence of the Divine Spirit. Hence saith the Apostle; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. which He shed on us abundantly, through Tesus Christ our Saviour." The streams of this spiritual river flow for the removal of sin and all uncleanness, either in the Church of God, or in the individual soul. Whosoever washes therein is cleansed from the loathsomeness of sin, even as Naaman, the captain of the host of the King of Syria, was cured of his leprosy, by washing himself seven times in the waters of Jordan. will I sprinkle clean water upon you," said the Lord to His Church of old, "and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." And saith the apostle; "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Without these purifying streams, never could we have made our hearts clean. For universal experience, not less than Scripture, declares, that sooner shall "the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, than those do good, that are accustomed to do evil." But, when the Spirit is poured out from on high, the soul is cleansed from its defilement. as well as from its guilt. Not that this spiritual cleansing is perfected in the present world. Even the purest among men feel, and mourn over their still remaining depravity and uncleanness. But the good work, which the Holy Spirit has begun. He will perfect to the day of God; and the time approaches, when all, upon whom His purifying streams have been poured, shall be seen in heaven, "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish."

This similitude conveys the idea of refreshing power. To a traveller crossing a burning desert, where he is on the point of fainting, through fatigue or thirst, how refreshing are the waters of a pure and flowing stream! Not less so to the fainting soul of the traweller to Zion, are the streams that flow from the river of God. This world, which others love so well, is to him a wilderness, wherein not a drop of living water can be obtained to assuage the thirst of his soul, and where

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he is perpetually constrained to cry out, with the Psalmist-"Hear me speedily, O Lord, my spirit faileth, my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate." "My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." But, when he betakes himself to the true source of comfort-the river whose streams make glad the city of Godhe again lifts up his head, and goes on his way with fresh buoyancy, vigour, and delight. Then, to him, "are the wilderness and the solitary place made glad, and the desert reioices and blossoms as the rose." God's heritage refreshed, when it is weary. And from no other source can true consolation flow into the drooping and downcast All earthly comforts are but as broken cisterns, which can hold no water. Invariably do they disappoint our expectations, and leave us hopeless in the hour of our greatest need. But the waters of God's river never deceive us, or prove unsatisfying. Those who drink of them, never thirst again, and even, under the heaviest calamities, often possess their souls in patience and in peace, and experience a sweet foretaste of those rivers of pleasure, to which they shall resort hereafter, in the paradise of God—a foretaste, which is a pledge of ultimate and everlasting possession. "The water that I shall give him," saith Jesus, "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

This similitude still further suggests the idea of peacefulness. This, perhaps, is the main idea of the Psalmist in the passage under consideration, the streams, that gladden the city of God, being evidently contrasted with the roaring and troubled waters of the sea, referred to in the immediately preceding verse. These streams, like the waters of Siloam, "go softly." No rushing, roaring floods are they, but soft and limpid is their flow, pleasant and silvery is their Hence the promise of Jehovah to voice. Zion is, "Behold, I will extend peace to her as a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." At first, indeed, the operations of the Holy Spirit, instead of instilling peace into the soul, may excite alarm. Accordingly, when aroused to a sense of his naturally lost and ruined condition, the sinner is not seldom seized with trembling

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and astonishment, and, like Belshazzar, when he saw the handwriting on the wall, his loins are loosed with fear, and his knees smite the one against the other. So long as this state continues, he may be justly compared to the troubled sea, which cannot rest. But, when the Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's, and shews them unto him, there is produced a peace which passeth all understanding, which a stranger doth not intermeddle with. and which the world can neither give, nor take away. Thus he, whose mind was erewhile tumultuously agitated, like the ocean in a storm, is soothed, and calmed, by the gladdening streams of the Holy Spirit of promise. The peace, of which he is thus made a partaker, is not, like many at least, of the pleasures of the world-a torrent of excitement, and tempestuous mirth, which drowns and disorders, for a season, all the purer feelings of the soul; but a holy, heavenly calm, a gentle, slowly-gliding, quiet stream-

"Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full."

This similitude suggests, lastly, the ideas of abundance and continuance. The Spirit is here compared, not to a scanty rivulet, which the scorching heat of summer might soon dry

up, but to a river of many streams, as though to intimate the fulness of the water of life which is in it, and the abundance of heavenly blessings which it is ever pouring forth. Accordingly, the prophet Isaiah says, "The glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams;" while the apostle speaks of the grace of the Spirit as "exceeding abundant." Believers, in every age of the world, have been supplied from this river: thousands, and tens of thousands, have drawn out of it, and been filled with its divine consolation; and yet there is no diminution. The efficacy of its streams is inexhaustible: nor shall they ever cease to flow. On the contrary, they are constantly widening and deepening; and, at last, they will be seen in heaven itself, "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb," and making glad the city of God.

Reader, does your soul thirst for these gladdening streams? Can you say with the Psalmist, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee. O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God?" Then, come unhesitatingly,

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and drink. These streams are free to all. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." And, having satisfied the longings of your own soul, be it yours to bring others to this river. Seek to diffuse its waters far and wide, until the waste places of the earth shall be refreshed by them, and made fruitful. Freely having received, freely give. Be ready to distribute, willing to communicate of this inestimable gift. from you, as from a secondary fountain, there flow not out rivers of living water, there is but too much reason to fear that you have never yet personally drunk of that "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God."

> "There is a stream, which issues forth From God's eternal throne, And from the Lamb, a living stream Clear as the crystal stone.

"The stream doth water Paradise;
It makes the angels sing;
One cordial drop revives my heart;
Hence all my joys do spring.

"Such joys as are unspeakable,
And full of glory too;
Such hidden manna, hidden pearls,
As worldlings do not know.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
From fancy 'tis concealed,
What Thou, Lord, hast laid up for Thine,
And hast to me revealed."
TOHN MASON.

# The New Creation.

### GAL. VI. 15.

"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

#### EPHES. ii. 10.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

### EPHES. iv. 24.

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

#### Cot., iii. 10.

And have put on the new man, which it renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

- "Come, Holy Spirit, come
  Let Thy bright beams arise,
  Dispel the darkness from our minds,
  And open all our eyes.
- "Cheer our desponding hearts, Thou heavenly Paraclete; Give us to lie, with humble hope, At our Redeemer's feet.
- "Revive our drooping faith,
  Our doubts and fears remove,
  And kindle in our hearts the flame
  Of never-dying love.
- "Convince us of our sin,
  Then lead to Jesus' blood,
  And to our wondering view reveal
  The secret love of God.
- "Show us that loving Man
  That rules the courts of bliss,
  The Lord of Hosts, the Mighty God,
  The Eternal Prince of Peace.
- "Tis Thine to cleanse the heart,
  To sanctify the soul,
  To pour fresh life in every part,
  And new-create the whole.
- "Dwell therefore in our hearts,
  Our minds from bondage free;
  Then we shall know, and praise, and love
  The Father, Son, and Thee!"

-Joseph Hart.

### THE NEW CREATION.

2 COR. V. 17.

"Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."



T is recorded of the ancient Spartans, that they were exceedingly slow and cautious in proceeding to pass sentence of death on any citizen, how

dark and atrocious soever might have been the crime laid to his charge. A considerable period was suffered to elapse ere he was brought to trial, and, if after deliberate investigation of the evidence brought forward, they were under the necessity of pronouncing the sentence of doom, even then it was long before they ventured to carry it into execution. It is said, that one of their judges, being interrogated by a stranger as to the reason for such uncommon delay, briefly but emphatically replied, "Because a mistake in such a case would be an irreparable mistake."

With how much greater force may not this reply be applied to the decision at which we arrive respecting our character and condition in the sight of Almighty God! Mistake here will, on the day of trial, be found to be everlastingly irreparable. Yet most melancholy it is to think, how multitudes deceive themselves on a point of such incalculable importance. In the estimation of some, nothing more is necessary in order to secure their eternal salvation, than to assume the name of Jesus Christ and profess His Gospel. Others, again, imagine they are safe because they have abandoned what was immoral in their former practice. And not a few there are, who seem to think they can repent and turn to God without the aid of His omnipotent grace, and by the mere strength of their own resolution.

The declaration contained in the above-quoted passage of Scripture, however, plucks up all such soul-destroying errors by the roots. On the one hand, it teaches us plainly, that the reformation of character which God requires is no mere external, superficial, or partial one. It is inward, radical, and total—a change of mind, and heart, and life. On the other hand, it teaches us as plainly, that this change is such as to baffle every effort of our own independent power, and can be effected only by a divine agency. "If any man be in Christ," saith the apostle, that is,

if any man truly believe in Christ, and so be united to Him as part of His mystical body, "he is a new creature," or as the original term may be rendered, "a new creation."

This similitude denotes the magnitude of the change, which arises from a vital union with Christ. It suggests that the subject of this change has been brought into a new and spiritual state of existence, and that his character has undergone such a total revolution, that he may justly be said to be "created anew." If there be any propriety or fitness in it at all, this metaphorical expression must represent a change that is thorough, comprehensive, and pervading. It is a change of the whole soul-not, indeed, of its essence or substance, but of its qualities and disposi-In regeneration, no new faculties, tions. affections, passions, or desires are imparted, nor is there even the additional communication to the soul of any new truths and doctrines beyond what is revealed in the written Word. But even with this restriction, the man who is in Christ undergoes such a thorough and complete change that he may well be called a "new creation." There is nothing that relates to his soul that has not

been modelled and organised anew. The divine image, in which he was originally created, is restored. His thoughts, his feelings, and his pursuits are all brought again under the creative hand of Jehovah. The whole principle of his life is altered—there is nothing in him or about him which has not suffered a change, as universal and complete as that effected at the creation of the universe, when darkness and confusion gave place to light and beauty.

The magnitude of this change may also be inferred from other figures employed to shadow it forth. It is represented as a new birth, as a coming out of darkness into light, as a spiritual cleansing, and as a resurrection from the dead, or spiritual quickening. All such similitudes manifestly imply, that the change which every sinner must undergo is a very great one. Most needful, therefore, is it, that we be on our guard against resting satisfied with mere external reformation, or anything that comes short of a thorough change in our views and principles and conduct. For "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

Is this, then, reader, your character and state before God? If your conscience give verdict that it is not thus with you, rest assured you are still a stranger to true wisdom, worth, and happiness; and, should you die in your present state, it had been better for you never to have been born. For "except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Seek, therefore, that your mind and character may be renewed, through the Cross and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Come to Him by faith, and out of His inexhaustible fulness, you will receive everything that is truly necessary for your safety and happiness.

But the similitude we are considering, suggests, also, that the change effected in regeneration, can be accomplished only by divine agency. The work of creation is the peculiar prerogative of the Lord Almighty. In like manner, none, but He, can create us anew in Christ Jesus. In man, there is nothing corresponding to the nature and importance of the work. He comes into the world, with a heart that is totally and universally depraved; and this depravity is evidenced by a strong and continual propensity to evil, and a fixed

and deep-rooted hatred of everything that is good. He is thus by nature averse to the change which the new creation implies. "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Even supposing, therefore, that he were able to accomplish, in his own might, the improvement that is necessary, yet, without some supernatural influence, he would for ever remain "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

But he is as unable as he is unwilling to do anything that is truly holy or spiritually good. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Hence it is explicitly declared, that believers are "born of God," and that they are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Consonant to these representations and statements is the testimony of experience and observation. The most promising means of grace are frequently seen to be altogether inadequate to the production of saving effects. There are multitudes of professing Christians,

who have been piously educated by religious parents, and instructed from their earliest childhood in the knowledge of the Gospelwho have been admitted by baptism into the outward and visible Church of God, and from year to year observed the ordinances of religion, and enjoyed continually the advantages of intercourse with those who fear the Lord and think upon His name-vet who, in spite of all these favourable external means. continue perfect strangers to any real saving change, and have as much need of conversion, as though they had never heard the Gospel preached, or known of its existence. All this does but clearly demonstrate, that the Almighty has reserved entirely in His own hand the power of creating men anew. The Gospel must come to them not "in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." On this principle it was, that St Paul acknowledged that the success of Apollos in watering, as well as his own in planting, was to be ascribed to the circumstance that God gave the increase.

Even the nature and magnitude of the change itself proclaim it to be a divine

work. For, if nothing short of omnipotence could cause the light at first to shine out of darkness, may we not reasonably infer, that no less resistless an agency is requisite to illumine the benighted soul-to give it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? If none but He, who at first "moved upon the face of the waters" could reduce the original chaos into harmony and order, can we suppose that a less powerful agent is needed to brood over the chaos of the sinner's soul, to rescue it from darkness, pollution, and misrule, and make it the habitation of light, purity, and peace? No. In the spiritual, as well as in the natural world, the energy of omnipotence must be put forth in quickening and creating. Even in his original state of holiness and perfection, man must have derived from God the power to act according to His will: inasmuch as nothing that is good is independent of Him, or originates without Him. For "every good and every perfect gift cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." But if divine influence were essential to the holiness of man in his

first estate, much more must it be so now, when he has lost his original rectitude, and is "dead in trespasses and sins."

Thus, every view that we can take of the new creation, leads us to discern in it "the finger of God," and to acknowledge, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name be the glory!"

"The transformation of apostate man From fool to wise, from earthly to divine, Is work for Him that made him."

In considering this subject it behoves us to be on our guard against the error, into which not a few seem to have fallen, of supposing, that the new creation can be originated without the exercise of our own faculties and powers. Though supernatural, it is effected in a manner quite consistent with our rational and moral nature. Iehovah "draws us with the cords of love, and the bands of a man." He does not supersede the exercise of our powers, but merely regu-"He puts a new lates and directs them. heart within us, that we may walk in His · statutes, and keep His commandments to do them." Nor, in this work, is any violence done to the will. Its freedom remains intact; but its obstinacy is overcome, its perverseness removed, and the whole soul powerfully, yet sweetly, attracted towards holiness and peace. Thus it is, "that God worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

This doctrine as to the necessity of supernatural influence to effectuate a saving change upon the soul, is one which we would earnestly press upon the attention of the reader. Many, it is to be feared, endeavour to accomplish, by their own unaided efforts, what can be produced-not indeed without their efforts-but only by the Holy Spirit of God working in them to will and to do. In thus acting, however, they do widely err. cannot of ourselves renew our minds. nature, we are morally powerless and dead, and it is not until God vouchsafes to shed His Holy Spirit upon us, that we are quickened and made alive. And if we seek to effect an improvement upon our character, without having recourse to the Spirit of the Lord, all our efforts, how earnest and persevering soever, must prove utterly abortive. We may succeed, it is true, in amending, to a considerable extent, our external conduct. but our spiritual condition in the sight of God remains the same as ever.

If then, dear reader, you are sincerely desirous to be created anew in Christ Jesus, you must begin by imploring the all-sufficient help of God's Holy Spirit. How plain is the command! How rich the encouragement! "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Ask, then, in faith, nothing doubting; and, according to His gracious promise, God will impart unto you abundantly of His Spirit, without which you can do nothing, but with which you can do all things.

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, With all Thy quickening powers, Kindle a flame of sacred love In these cold hearts of ours. "Look how we grovel here below, Fond of these trifling toys, Our souls can neither fly nor go To reach eternal joys!

- "In vain we tune our formal songs,
  In vain we strive to rise;
  Hosannas languish on our tongues,
  And our devotion dies.
- "Dear Lord, and shall we ever lie At this poor dying rate?" Our love so faint, so cold to Thee, And Thine to us so great!
- "Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove, With all Thy quickening powers! Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love And that shall kindle ours."

-ISAAC WATTS.

- <sup>66</sup> Holy Spirit, in my breast Grant that lively faith may rest, And subdue each rebel thought To believe what Thou hast taught.
- "When around my sinking soul Gathering waves of sorrow roll, Spirit blest, the tempest still, And with Hope my bosom fill-
- "Holy Spirit, from my mind
  Thought and wish and will unkind,
  Deed and word unkind remove,
  And my bosom fill with love.
- "Faith, and Hope, and Charity, Comforter, descend from Thee; Thou the Anointing Spirit art, These Thy gifts to us impart:

"Till our faith be lost in sight,
Hope be swallow'd in delight,
And love return to dwell with Thee,
In the threefold Deity!"
—BISHOP RICHARD MANT.

"Full of weakness and of sin, We look to Thee for life; Lord, Thy gracious work begin, And calm the inward strife!

"Though our hearts are prone to stray, Be Thou a constant Friend; Though we know not how to pray, Thy saving mercy send!

"Let Thy Spirit, gracious Lord, Our souls with love inspire, Strength and confidence afford, And breathe celestial fire!

4º Teach us first to feel our need, Then all that need supply; When we hunger deign to feed, And hear us when we cry!

"When we cleave to earthly things,
Send Thy reviving grace;
Raise our souls, and give them wings,
To reach Thy holy place!
—WILLIAM HILEY BATHURST.

# 64 THE NEW CREATION.

- "Holy Spirit, gently come,
  Raise us from our fallen state,
  Fix Thy everlasting home
  In the hearts Thou didst create!
  Gift of God most High!
  Visit every troubled breast;
  Light, and Life, and Love supply;
  Give our spirits perfect rest!
- W Heavenly Unction from above, Comforter of weary saints, Fountain, Life, and Fire of Love, Hear, and answer our complaints! Thee we humbly pray, Finger of the Living God, Now Thy sevenfold grace display, Shed our Saviour's love abroad!
  - Now Thy quickening influence bring,
    On our spirits sweetly move;
    Open every mouth to sing
    Jesus' everlasting love!
    Lighten every heart;
    Drive our enemies away;
    Joy and peace to us impart;
    Lead us in the heavenly way!"
    —WILLIAM HAMMOND

# The Wind.

#### CANT. iv. 16.

"Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south: blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits."

### EZEK. XXXVII. 9.

"Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live."

### Acts. ii. 2-4.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

"Lord God the Holy Ghos,
In this accepted hour,
As on the day of Pentecost,
Descend in all Thy power!
We meet with one accord
In our appointed place,
And wait the promise of our Lord,
The Spirit of all grace.

"Like mighty rushing wind,
Upon the waves beneath,
Move with one impulse every mind,
One soul, one feeling breathe:
The young, the old, inspire
With wisdom from above,
And give us hearts and tongues of fire,
To pray, and praise, and love.

"Spirit of Light, explore
And chase our gloom away,
With lustre shining more and more
Unto the perfect day!
Spirit of Truth, be Thou
In life and death our Guide!
O Spirit of adoption, now
May we be sanctified!"

-JAMES MONTGOMERY.

### THE WIND.

#### John iii. 8.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."



O the true believer, who is called to live a life of close and constant communion with God, the world of nature abounds with illustrations

of the world of grace. Thus, the sun in the firmament suggests to his mind the Sun of Righteousness rising upon the souls of men with healing in His wings. The rain and the snow, that come down from heaven, remind him of the Word of the Gospel, which goeth forth out of God's mouth. The refreshing dew tells him of those silent and salutary influences of the Holy Spirit of God, by which the whole face of the moral world is refreshed and revived. The flowing spring leads him to think of the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness; and the rugged rock brings to his recollection Him, who is the Rock of

Ages, and who is to all who receive Him. as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Thus, by a holy mechanism, may the believer make the creature a spiritual ladder by which to ascend to the Creator. And the more he accustoms himself, with the help of Scripture to look on the things which are seen and temporal as so many finger-posts and steps to guide and raise him to the knowledge and thought of those things which are unseen and eternal, the nearer will he feel himself brought to the great Fountain of all being and blessedness; and thus every place will become to him a Bethel, and every object a preacher. Nor is this application of the phenomena of nature unauthorised. The sacred writers frequently have recourse to them for the illustration of spiritual truths; and, in the passage placed at the head of this chapter, our great Teacher himself describes the operations of the Holy Spirit in regeneration by a similitude drawn from the wind—one of the most simple and familiar agents in the natural world. Let us, then, proceed to inquire in what respects the analogy between the Spirit's influence and the wind may be traced.

There is a striking resemblance in the uncertainty and variableness of their operation. The wind bloweth where it listeth, that is, where it wills or pleases. Its motions, indeed, are under the direction and control of the Almighty, for we are assured, that "He gathereth the wind in His fists," and that "the stormy wind fulfils His word:" still the laws, by which it is regulated, are to us inexplicable. It bloweth where, and when, and how, it pleases. So, too, the operations of the Spirit of God are characterised by great diversity and uncertainty. He "divideth to every one severally as He will." While a few highly-favoured lands receive the most copious and refreshing influences, others are suffered to continue the barren and deadly wastes of Satan's dark domain. The ordinances of grace are vouchsafed to thousands. but not every one who waits upon them is savingly profited. Equally great is the diversity in the time of the Spirit's operations upon the soul. Sometimes, we behold God "ordaining strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," while, at other seasons, the irresistible energy of His grace is seen, in softening the hearts of those who had grown

old in the service of sin. He touches the rock, which for ages had stood unmoved, and causes the waters to gush forth. He says to "the dry bones, Live," and, immediately, "the breath comes into them, and they live, and stand up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." And while He is thus pleased to call His chosen in His appointed and accepted time, His sovereignty is not less clearly displayed, in the diversity of those moral forces, which are brought to bear upon the hearts of men. Some are wafted by the softest breath, and gentlest gales of love; others are driven by the rudest storms of fear into the haven where they would be-the calm port of present peace and everlasting rest. Some, like Lydia, are secretly and sweetly allured to the Saviour, and can scarcely declare the time or the manner in which they have been brought into a state of grace and salvation; others, like the jailer at Philippi, suffer for a season the terrors of the Lord, and, under a sense of their guilt and danger, are constrained to cry out, as in an agony of alarm, "What must we do to be saved?"

The operation of the Spirit may be justly

compared to the wind, in respect, also, that it uniformly becomes apparent by its effects. Though itself invisible, yet we hear the sound of the wind, and can trace its agency in the important changes which are produced by it in the economy of nature. Equally effective and manifest is the change which the Holy Spirit produces upon the souls of men. Those who have become the subjects of it "have put off," (as the apostle says,) "concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts. and are renewed in the spirit of their minds. and have put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It must be acknowledged, that this change is not always of such a marked and striking nature that it cannot be mistaken. Many conform to rites, use language, and utter sentiments sanctioned by religion, while, at the same time, their hearts are not right towards God. The superficial observer may be unable to distinguish their external deportment from that of true Christians, yet their morality is essentially defective. flows from motives which are worldly and carnal, and therefore how highly soever it

may be esteemed among men, it is an abomination in the sight of God. On the other hand, it may happen that a real change of heart has taken place, although imperceptible to the world. No doubt, there are cases, in which the transition from a life of ungodliness to a life of faith is so rapid and marvellous, that all must observe it. The Sabbathbreaker is beheld waiting upon God in His sanctuary; the companion of the dissolute and profane is found associating with the godly and devout: the churl is seen becoming bountiful, and the vile person liberal: and, at times, a Zaccheus comes to his defrauded neighbour, declaring his readiness to restore him fourfold. In other cases, however, regeneration comes attended by few outward signs, and these not very deeply or distinctly marked. The renewed man may be so situated that he has comparatively little opportunity of exhibiting the effects of the change in his outward behaviour. Stretched, perhaps, on a bed of pain and languishing, or excluded by misfortune or poverty from the world's regard, he is prevented from manifesting by his life the full extent of the change which has been wrought

upon his heart. In other instances the moral conduct of the individual may have previously been such as to render it unsusceptible of any remarkable alteration. He may have been amiable from his very infancy, faithful and just in all his dealings, liberal of his abundance and patient in privation, compassionate to the sufferings and tender over the infirmities of his brethren, and breathing always the very breath of peace, order, and propriety; for he may be all this, while yet his soul remains unquickened by the Spirit of the living God. Now, in such instances, when regeneration takes place, it is quite possible that the eye of the world may be unable to observe any change; but, as far as there is opportunity the effect of his renewed sentiments will be seen in the Christian's daily walk. "By their fruits ye shall know them." In every instance of conversion, no matter how gentle or how gradual may have been the transition, the effects will always be made manifest-" old things will have passed away, and all things will have become new." Accordingly, it is this change in the external conduct, which is uniformly held forth in Scripture as the most decisive evidence of genuine personal Christianity. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The regenerate are represented as "dead to sin;" as having "their fruit unto holiness," as "having purified their souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit," as "showing out of a good conversation their works with meekness of wisdom," while the fruits of that Spirit which they have received are declared to be "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance."

But the work of the Spirit of God may further be likened unto the wind on account of its mysterious character. Although the effects of the wind are manifest, yet we are ignorant alike of its origin, and of its destiny, and of the laws, and limits, of its course. We cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth. So is it with the operation of the Spirit. The outward effects of it are seen in the life, but its inward working is hidden

and mysterious; for "as thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." The stream may be discerned, but the fountain is invisible. The tree, indeed, is known by its fruits, and, therefore, these must be seen; but we perceive not the sap, which rises from the trunk and spreads itself through every branch and leaf; nor do we see the outpouring of the dew of heaven, which silently descends upon the tree, and supplies it with continual moisture and vigour.

But, though the work of the Spirit in regenerating the soul be mysterious, we are not, on that account, to question its reality. For, with equal reason might we question the existence of the wind. It is by its effects alone, that we can discover its operation. From these effects, we infer the operation of the cause. Now, so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Wherever the divine image is produced, and the soul is renewed, we may certainly infer that the Spirit has been working, though we know not when, or where, or how. "Marvel not, therefore, when it is said

unto you, Ye must be born again." If we understand not earthly things, how shall we understand heavenly? If we cannot fully comprehend the material world, or the most familiar objects of sense, must not the knowledge of spiritual things, of objects which lie remote from the observation of our senses, be confessed to be too wonderful for us? The circumstance, therefore, that the mode of the Spirit's operation cannot be explained, is no argument against its truth. So far from this being the case, its very mysteriousness, we apprehend, affords no slight presumption in favour of its credibility; because, from the analogy of nature, we find that the same mysterious character belongs to all God's works, and, in a matter of so great importance as this, we are not to expect that He will depart from His usual mode of working. Had the work of regeneration been unattended with mystery, we might have been in danger of concluding that it did not proceed from Him, inasmuch as it wanted His usual signature.

Such are a few of the most prominent points of analogy which obtain between the unseen wind, and the operations of the blessed Spirit on the heart. Let us now consider very briefly what are the practical lessons that are thus conveyed to us.

One thing is clear. If, as we have seen. the operations of the Spirit be characterised by exceeding uncertainty and variableness. how anxiously should we strive to improve them when we are brought under their influence! As the very inconstancy and uncertainty of the wind tend to quicken the watchfulness and stimulate the exertions of the mariner, whose life, at sea, according as it proves propitious, or adverse, is one of ease and safety, or of hardship and danger; so should it be in spiritual things. There are times and seasons when the breathings of the Spirit come more powerfully upon the soul than at others; when a disposition is felt to attend more seriously to the things of eternity; when the light of divine truth shines into the heart: when a sense of guilt and danger is experienced; when a determination is formed to that which is good; and when the great object of desire is to be prepared for entering into the presence of the Almighty, and there giving in an account of all the deeds done in the body. Let us beware of permitting these seasons to pass away unimproved. God will not always suffer His Spirit to be grieved. Let us, therefore, set a proper value upon His operations. Let us watch for the blowing of these celestial gales, and when they come, be it ours to seek that they may breathe effectually upon the garden of our soul, that the spices thereof may flow forth.

Again, if the agency of the Spirit is uniformly manifest by its effects, ought we not seriously and impartially to inquire whether our lives give testimony to His operation upon our hearts? Vain are all pretensions to the possession of true religion, if the effects of the Spirit, as they are described in Scripture, be not distinctly manifest in our character and conduct. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; they that sow unto the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." How dreadful is the delusion under which they live, who imagine themselves to be born of God, whilst they walk according to the course of this world and are yielding their members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity! He that is born of God overcometh the world, doeth righteousness, and loveth the brethren.

Happy are they who, on reviewing these features of the Christian character, and comparing them with their own experience, can say, *Hereby* we know that we are in Christ.

In conclusion, let us remember that though the agency of the Spirit is secret and mysterious, yet it is generally through the channel of outward ordinances that He conveys the communications of His grace to our souls. To these ordinances, then, let us have recourse with diligence, and in humble reliance on His promised blessing. Neglecting to wait upon God in the way of His own appointment, we can never reasonably expect His aid, but must inevitably provoke Him to withhold from us that divine influence without which we can do nothing. Let us not, then, attempt to separate what He has united. The means and the end are inseparably connected in the world of grace no less than in the world of nature. "Wherefore, let us work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

- "When God of old came down from Heaven, In power and wrath He came; Before His feet the clouds were riven, Half darkness and half flame.
- "Around the trembling mountain's base
  The prostrate people lay;
  A day of wrath and not of grace;
  A dim and dreadful day.
- "But when He came the second time, He came in power and love; Softer than gale at morning prime, Hover'd His holy Dove.
- "The fires that rush'd on Sinai down In sudden torrents dread, Now gently light, a glorious crown, On every sainted head.
- "Like arrows went those lightnings forth, Wing'd with the sinner's doom, But these, like tongues, o'er all the earth, Proclaiming life to come.
- "And, as on Israel's awe-struck ear,
  The voice exceeding loud,
  The trump, that angels quake to hear,
  Thrill'd from the deep dark cloud;
- "So when the Spirit of our God Came down, His flock to find, A voice from heaven was heard abroad, A rushing mighty wind.
- "Nor doth the outward ear alone
  At that high warning start;
  Conscience gives back th' appalling tone,
  'Tis echoed in the heart.

"It fills the Church of God, it fills
The sinful world around;
Only in stubborn hearts and wills
No place for it is found.

"To other strains our souls are set;
A giddy whirl of sin
Fills ear and brain, and will not let
Heaven's harmonies come in.

"Come, Lord! come Wisdom, Love, and Power; Open our ears to hear! Let us not miss th' accepted hour; Save, Lord, by love or fear!"

-JOHN KEBLE.

- "Hearest thou not, O man,
  The sound of the rushing wind,
  That bloweth where it listeth,
  Leaving the clouds behind?
- "Thou hearest the sound thereof,
  When the wind of heaven bloweth;
  But whence it cometh thou knowest not,
  Nor yet the way it goeth.
- "Thinkest thou not, O man,
  When thou hearest the wind of heaven,
  Of Him, whose type the wind is,
  To the Church in mercy given;
- "Thine eyes may not discern Him, Nor yet the rushing wind, That bloweth where it listeth, Leaving the clouds behind.

"But He whose type the wind is, Of life the Lord and Giver, Guideth His Church aright, Abideth with thee ever;

"Who by the prophets spake,
In days long glided by,
And as a dove descended
From His glorious home on high.

"His presence was discern'd
In cloven tongues of flame,
When a loud and rushing wind
Through the upper chamber came.

"On whom the Spirit rested,
Had glorious gifts that day;
And they went, in the Spirit's might,
On their strange and perilous way."

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-Church of England Magazine.

# The Temple and its Builder.

#### 7 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."

#### 1 Cor. vi. 19.

"What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?"

#### 2 Cor. vi. 16.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

#### Ерн. іі. 20-22.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an inhabitation of God through the Spirit."

#### 1 PET. ii. 4, 5.

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

#### MATT. xvi. 18.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "Great is the Lord our God, And let His praise be great; He makes His churches His abode, His most delightful seat.

"These temples of His grace,
How beautiful they stand!
The honour of our native place,
And bulwark of our land.

"In Zion God is known,
A refuge in distress;
How bright has His salvation shone
Through all her palaces!

" Oft have our fathers told, Our eyes have often seen, How well our God secures the fold Where His own sheep have been.

"In every new distress
We'll to His house repair,
We'll think upon His wondrous grace,
And seek deliverance there."

-ISAAC WATTS.

## THE TEMPLE AND ITS BUILDER.

ZECH. vi. 13.
"Even He shall build the temple of the Lord."



MONG the numerous types and symbols employed under the ancient dispensation to prepare the world for the advent of the Mes-

siah, one of the most remarkable and appropriate is presented in the preceding verses of the chapter from which the above quotation is selected. It appears that of the Jews, who had chosen to continue in Babylon after their brethren had availed themselves of the decree of Cyrus to return to their own land, there were some, who, receiving intelligence that the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem was being rebuilt, sent liberal contributions towards the furtherance of that great and important undertaking. On the same day in which their united offerings were brought to the Holy City, the prophet Zechariah was directed to go into the house of Josiah, and taking a portion of them, consisting of gold and silver, he was to form it into two crowns, which were to be set upon the head of Joshua, the son of Josedech, the high priest, as emblems of priesthood and royalty, and were then to be deposited in the temple as a memorial before the Lord. In explanation of this symbolical action, Zechariah was directed, in the name of the Lord of hosts, to turn the attention of Joshua to the Messiah, who, as the antitype of himself, should not only unite the regal with the sacerdotal office, but accomplish the building of the temple of the "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord."

In this prophetic announcement two important truths are clearly involved—that the Church is God's temple, and that of this temple Jesus Christ is the builder.

The Church is God's temple. By the term Church, we are to understand the whole number of the redeemed from among men—all, to whatever visible association they may belong, or by whatever name they may be called, who really believe in the Lord Jesus

Christ to the saving of the soul. These are frequently represented in the sacred Scriptures under the similitude of a temple. They are styled "the temple of the living God," and are said to be "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Again, it is declared, that, "coming to Christ, they also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

This figurative representation of the Church calls us to contemplate it as the residence of God. This is one of the main purposes of a temple; it is the house in which God dwells. True it is, that, in one sense He dwells everywhere. All nature is His temple—all space His abode; He fills heaven and earth with His presence; heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Still, there is a peculiar sense in which He dwells in the Church. There, He manifests Himself in another way than He does unto the world. There, he gives the most distinguishing proofs of His gracious presence, and exhibits the

richest tokens of His favour and love. Thus did He manifest Himself of old in the temple at Jerusalem, when He dwelt in it by a visible symbol of His presence—the Shechinah, or cloud of mingled splendour and gloom which rested above the mercy-seat, and which is so frequently mentioned in Scripture as "the glory of the Lord." Hence of the ancient Zion. He declared. "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Under the present spiritual dispensation, Jehovah's presence is no longer, as of old, accompanied with visible signs or symbols: but it is not on that account the less real. In both dispensations, the name of the city is Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there, God is still the glory in the midst of His people: He dwelleth in them and walketh in "If any man love me," says Christ, them. "he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." And again He has declared, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them."

But the Church further resembles the temple of the Lord, because it is appropriated and

set apart for sacred purposes. When Solomon , had completed the erection of the temple at Jerusalem, it was publicly and solemnly dedicated by him to the service and glory of God. Even so believers are set apart and sanctified by divine grace, and sweetly constrained to yield themselves to God. Deeply feeling that they are not their own, but bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, they glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits which are His. Hence it is declared. "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself." "This people have I formed for myself, to show forth my praise." Formerly, they worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator; but now, they are separated from the world, and all its lying vanities, and the language of their hearts is. "O Lord our God, other lords besides Thee have had dominion over us; but by Thee only will we make mention of Thy name." Henceforth they are dedicated to the service of God and His Son, by the sprinkling of the blood of atonement, by the washing of regeneration, and by their own inward consent and outward profession. They are all sanctified ones,-chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they might be holy and without blame before God in love." The members of their bodies, the powers and faculties of their minds, their time, their property, their influence are all sincerely and unreservedly given up to God for ever, and they cannot devote them to purposes different from His, without incurring the guilt of sacrilege and desecration.

Again, the Church resembles the temple of the Lord inasmuch as spiritual worship and sacrifices are perpetually offered to Him therein. This also constitutes a distinguishing feature in a temple; because it is essential that it be used for the purpose for which it is set apart, otherwise it would soon be desecrated, and considered a common building. In like manner, believers are not only called to show forth God's praise, but this end is actually answered by them. They diligently wait upon God's service, and make their daily offerings. The sacrifices which they present are not such as were offered under the Old Testament dispensation—the blood of bulls and of goats; but the sacrifices of righteousness, of prayer, and of praise, of a broken and a contrite heart; with such sacrifices God is

well pleased. In presenting these, they have respect to Christ, who, by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and in whom alone either their persons or their services can find acceptance with God. Hence St Paul in speaking of believers as being built up a spiritual house, varies the metaphor and compares them to "an holy priesthood," whose work consisted in "offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

Having thus seen in what respects the Church resembles the temple of the Lord, we proceed to show how of this temple Jesus is the builder.

He is so, inasmuch as He has laid the foundation. He aione was able to make men fit for serving the purposes of a temple. On Him therefore, as the foundation, must all our hopes of salvation be built; for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." In his original state man was the temple of Jehovah. Every chamber of his soul was adorned with the beauties of holiness, and brightly reflected the divine image. He was the chosen habitation of God—the mansion and residence

of His indwelling glory. On the altar of his heart the flame of love was kindled, and from it ascended the incense of prayer and of praise. But, by sin this beautiful structure has been desecrated and overthrown. Its altar is overturned, its lamps extinguished. its golden candlestick removed. It lies in melancholy ruins; and instead of being the dwelling-place of God, it is become, like fallen Babylon, "the habitation of devils, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." But, out of the dust and desolation of this temple it is the design of the dispensation of grace to raise a new and more glorious structure, and to render it once more a suitable residence for the Divine Spirit. Of this restored temple, in which Jehovah is to dwell for ever, Jesus is the foundation and chief corner-stone. Through Him we are reconciled to God, and rendered conformable to the divine image. By His atonement He makes men fit for becoming the dwelling-place of God, and by His Spirit they are rendered the means of showing forth His praise.

As the builder of the spiritual temple, Jesus Christ selects and prepares the materials of

which it is composed. These materials are living stones—ransomed sinners—hewn from the quarry of a common depravity, and made ready for the several places assigned to them in the building. Naturally they were altogether unfit for forming part of the spiritual edifice. They were dead stones-without God in the world, alienated from the life of God. They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge. He was not in all their thoughts. Their habitual character and conduct only showed too plainly that they were utterly unqualified for intercourse with God or for promoting His glory. But a blessed change was at length produced on them. These dead stones were made alive, and became suitable materials in the erection of the temple of the Lord. And this change was effected by Christ. He selected them from among their fellow-sinners, and then formed them a people for Himself. By uniting them to Himself, they were washed, justified, and sanctified, and so fitted for answering the great end of a temple, in doing honour to the Divinity that dwells in it. Instruments may, indeed, have been employed by Him in this work, but these can effect nought save through

the agency of His Spirit. The workmen in the temple of Solomon might say of the carved work, "This and that were the work of my hands; they were formed by my skill and are a monument of my power." But, in the Church of God, there is not a single stone laid in the whole building which was not hewn from the rock and fitted for its place by the hand of Jesus; and the chisel has as much right to boast against him who worketh therewith, as any instrument which the Lord may use, has to arrogate to himself any part of His honour.

As the builder of the temple, Jesus puts together the materials He has selected and prepared. His Church is not a mass of disjointed materials, or polished stones, but a spiritual house. Its members are not only honoured and happy as individuals, but are formed into a holy, honourable, and blessed fellowship. They are all living stones built into one temple, fully polished by the same masterhand, and cemented together by the same divine principles. They are branches of the same vine, members of one body. In consequence of their union with Christ they have an unseen but mutual connexion with each

other. Hence in speaking of the Church, the apostle says that "the whole building is fitly framed together in Christ," and that believers are "builded together in Christ for an habitation of God,"

Such is the mode in which the Lord Iesus doth build up the spiritual temple. Amidst all the strifes and contentions of this tumultuous world, this great work has been silently, but surely, and steadily, progressing. Daily, has the Lord been adding to the Church such as shall be saved; and, resting on the sure word of prophecy, we can securely anticipate the triumphant completion of the work. vain is all opposition, when it is the omnipotent Redeemer who is carrying it on. As, in the ages that are gone, this spiritual edifice has been gradually increasing in height and glory, so shall it continue to rise, developing to succeeding generations its fair proportions, and still increasing in loveliness and beauty, till, at length, the top-stone is brought forth with shoutings of-" Grace, grace unto it!"

> " Hark, the Church proclaims her honour, And her strength is only this: God hath laid His choice upon her And the work she doth is His.

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"He His Church hath firmly founded, He will guard what He began; We, by sin and foes surrounded, Build her bulwarks as we can.

"Frail and fleeting are our powers, Short our days, our foresight dim, And we own the choice not ours, We were chosen first by Him.

"Onward then! for nought despairing, Calm we follow at His word, Thus through joy and sorrow bearing Faithful witness to our Lord.

"Though we here must strive with weakness, Though in tears we often bend, What His might began in weakness, Shall achieve a glorious end."

-S. Preiswerk.

# The Merchandise of Time.

### Ps. lxxxix. 47.

"Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"

### I COR. vii. 29.

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth
that both they that have wives be as though they had
none; and they that weep, as though they wept not;
and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not;
and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and
they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the
fashion of this world passeth away."

### EPH. v. 15, 16.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

### 2 Cor. vi. 2.

"(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)"

### Prov. xxvii. 1.

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

### ECCLES. ix. 10.

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest."

### JOHN ix. 4.

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." "To-morrow, Lord, is Thine, Lodged in Thy Sovereign hand, And, if its sun arise and shine, It shines at Thy command.

"The present moment flies,
And bears our life away;
O make Thy servants truly wise,
That they may live to-day!

"Since on this winged hour Eternity is hung, Waken by Thy almighty power The aged and the young!

"One thing demands our care;
O be it still pursued!
Lest, slighted once, the season fair
Should never be renew'd!

"To Jesus may we fly
Swift as the morning light;
Lest life's young golden beams should die
In sudden endless night!"
—PHILIF DODDRIDGE.

### THE MERCHANDISE OF TIME.

Col. iv. 5. "Redeeming the time."



HERE is nothing of which the men of the world are disposed to form a lower estimate than time. Although frequently complaining of

its shortness and velocity, yet of nothing are they more prodigal. Instead of seeking to improve, their ingenuity is exercised in learning how to "kill time." They feel its progress to be so sluggish, that they know not well how to employ it, and the weight of it is a burden which they are unable to bear. Hence they eagerly seize on anything that promises to beguile the passing hour, and amusement, or, literally speaking, "pastime," becomes the principal occupation of life. The apostle, however, being fully alive to the great value, and vast importance of time, formed a very different estimate of it, and accordingly exhorted those to whom he wrote to "redeem" it. This expression is commonly employed in Scripture to convey the idea of buying back, but here it signifies simply to buy. Time is thus beautifully presented to our view as a precious commodity, offered to us, as it were, in the great marketplace of this world; and we are required to use all diligence and earnestness in making merchandise of it.

This metaphorical admonition suggests. that time is worthy of being purchased. For we could not be fitly called upon to buy time, if it were not a possession of great value, or at least one which would yield a good return. Now, one thing that shows the great value of time is, that, on the manner in which we employ it, our eternal destiny depends. It is one of the plainest of all the principles of earthly commerce, that any commodity is desirable in proportion to the returns which it is capable of securing. And the same principle ought to be recognised and acted upon in the case of those who would make a proper use of time. If we fail to improve it, the inevitable consequence will be the loss of all that is fitted to nourish and bless our immortal souls, and our being exposed to eternal and irretrievable ruin. Rightly occupied, on the other hand, it will

secure our everlasting happiness, and make us partakers of a "treasure in the heavens that faileth not." Now, the only way in which we can escape eternal misery and inherit everlasting bliss, is by a sincere and cordial reliance upon the atoning sacrifice. which has been offered by the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It is this faith alone, wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, that will produce that radical change in the heart and mind, which forms the only "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." But let us remember that the present life is the only season in which this change can be undergone. At death, the character and condition of every human being is fixed and unalterable for Then, "he that is unrighteous must be unrighteous still, and he that is filthy must be filthy still,"

How solemn and affecting in this view is the responsibility of the present hour! and how earnestly should we strive to obtain an interest in Jesus! In the ordinary concerns of life, when we have the prospect of securing

an inferior and temporal good, we act upon the principle, that the possibility of failure should be avoided with an anxiety and diligence proportionate to the magnitude of the interest which is at stake. Why is not the same principle practically applied to the high and awful concerns of the future? These. indeed, are of infinite moment. The alternative to be decided by the mode in which we employ our time on earth, is the alternative between eternal life and eternal death -between the blackness of despair and the brightness of bliss-between the favour and the curse of the Almighty-between heaven and hell. Seeing, therefore, that the alternative is so weighty, should there not be the utmost anxiety and earnestness to secure life, and to avoid even the possibility of finally coming short of it. Whatsoever our hands find to do in the work of religion and of God, let us do it with our might, for in the grave whither all are hastening there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, nor device left practicable for man.

What so much enhances the value of time is, that notwithstanding that the work of preparation for eternity is one of infinite importance, yet the period allotted to us for the performance of it is short and uncertain. Human life may indeed appear long when viewed in prospect, but when once past, its longest term seems only "as a tale that is told."

"Time in advance behind him hides his wings, And seems to creep decrepit with his age; Behold him when passed by, what then is seen But his broad pinions swifter than the wind? And all mankind, in contradiction strong, Rueful, aghast, cry out on his career."

But the time given us for preparing for eternity is extremely *uncertain*, as well as short. Of its continuance we are never for a single moment secure; for though all men know that they must die, yet respecting either the time or the manner of their death, they are entirely ignorant.

"For Heaven has wisely hid from human sight The dark decrees of future fate, And sown their seeds in depth of night."

But even though our lives should be extended to their utmost term, it would still be our duty to purchase time for the high interests of eternity; for the longer we delay this all-important work, we must render its accomplishment the more difficult and the more improbable. How many are there who, though convinced that at this moment they are totally unprepared for eternity, yet lull their fears of it asleep, and go on deferring the important work of reformation from day to day, from week to week, from month to month, from year perhaps to year, in the fond imagination that there exists no great cause for anxiety as yet, and that it will be better to wait for some more convenient season. While admitting the transcendent importance of the work that is given them to do, they yet spend the precious hours of life in vanity and folly, letting all their religion evaporate in empty resolutions, till, at an hour that they think not, the warning is given. and at midnight is the cry made, and, when they seek to enter in with the Bridegroom. the door is shut. If hitherto we have thus deceived ourselves with the hope of a future repentance, it behoves us to consider, that even supposing we are spared to see the period which we have fixed upon for giving our hearts and minds to the things which belong unto our everlasting peace, it is but too probable that either our good resolutions will all

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be forgotten, or some new temptations will arise to lead us, step by step, day by day, down to irremediable destruction.

> "Procrastination is the thief of time, Year after year it steals, till all are fled— And to the mercies of a moment leaves The vast concerns of an eternal state."

The work of preparation for eternity is indeed most weighty in itself, and in its consequences most momentous; and if now we find that it requires all our efforts, and all our diligence, and all our vigilance, the difficulty will, in consequence of the well-known effect of habit, be increased by delay. The longer we continue in a state of sin, and of impenitence, the more hard and callous will our hearts become, and the more settled and confirmed shall we be in transgression against God. Accordingly, it is declared, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." And hence we are warned, "lest we should be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." True it is that divine grace can even at the hour of death change the heart of the most hardened sinner; but we have no warrant

for imagining that those who have longest resisted that grace will be honoured with the most remarkable displays of it. Not only is every promise of grace uniformly restricted to the present moment, but the Scriptures contain no obscure intimation that the obstinately impenitent may be abandoned to the consequences of their folly. We are assured that the Spirit of God, when long resisted, ceases to strive with the spirit of man. in which case repentance becomes not only difficult and improbable, but absolutely hopeless-hopeless as the conclusion of eternity or the reversal of doom. We read that "Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully and with tears;" and it is said of those who continue wilfully impenitent, and who seek not the Lord till age and trouble come, and death and hell appear ready to receive them, "Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early but they shall not find me," And how awful is that saying of the prophet, "He that made them will not have mercy on them; and He that formed them will show them no favour."

The metaphorical admonition of the apostle.

while thus suggesting that time is worthy of being purchased for the high interests of eternity, teaches us at the same time that we ought to take heed and beware of those things which would rob us of any portion of it. The first and most obvious of these is idleness. Much of our time is absolutely lost in inaction and sloth. When, however, a conviction of the infinite importance and value of time has been borne in upon the mind, it will necessarily influence all the springs of action. and make us discharge with alacrity and diligence all the duties of active life. The conduct of the spiritual merchant is in this point of light, aptly represented by that of the votary of earthly commerce. In his eager flight from poverty, the latter "rises up early, and sits up late, and eats the bread of sorrow;" he studies and toils, and suffers patiently, in order to retrieve the losses he may have sustained, and repair the reverses he may have encountered. Even such is the conduct of the individual who would purchase time and opportunity for religion. Heedless of rest, and pleasure, the whole energies of his renewed nature are incessantly put forth in active exertions for the promotion of the honour

of God, and the happiness of man. He "works the works of God," he "works out his own salvation with fear and trembling; he forgets the things which are behind, and reaches forth unto those things which are before, and presses forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God which is in Christ Jesus."

Another mode in which time is lost to us is by unduly devoting it to the cares and business of this life. In the prosecution of secular business, how frequently is the heart so full of earthly cares, that, like the inn at Bethlehem, there is no room in it for Jesus! and even at those very periods when we are most specially called upon to give ourselves wholly to thoughts of God and heaven do we not sometimes find the vanities of the world intruding themselves upon us?-thus clogging the wings of the soul in its upward flight. and "choking the good seed of the word, and making it unfruitful." Hence our blessed Lord solemnly cautioned His disciples against this secularising influence of the world, saying, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the

life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Not that the Gospel either requires or encourages indolence or sloth in the management of our worldly affairs. On the contrary, it commands us to be "not slothful in business;" to "attend to the state of our flocks and herds;" to "provide" for ourselves and others, "things honest in the sight of all men;" and it expressly declares that "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." But, while the Gospel permits, nay, positively commands us to be diligent and industrious in all that concerns our worldly interest, it at the same time as positively prohibits such an attachment to earthly things as would so occupy and engross the mind as to lead us to forget the "things above," and consider our present enjoyment as the chief and supreme good. While we are to prosecute with diligence our worldly calling, we must yet with singleness of heart, be serving God: we are to be "not slothful in business," but at the same time "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

Much time is also lost to us by its being

devoted to unnecessary recreations and overdone amusements. These, it behoves us sedulously to avoid. It is altogether unnecessary to enter on the question as to the propriety or impropriety of particular amusements. Religion by no means condemns such amusements as are necessary to unbend the mind, so that its elasticity may be preserved, and renewed vigour and alacrity given it for resuming its proper employment; but it does most unquestionably disallow and condemn the undue use of any amusement, or the following up of any recreation in such a manner as to encroach upon those hours which belong of right to God, to our souls, and to eternity.

The metaphorical admonition before us suggests, also, that we should watch for and improve those occasions, in which we can best promote not only our own eternal interests, but also those of others. The merchant, who is intent upon the acquisition of worldly prosperity, watches with eagle eye every opening of speculation and avenue to gain, and seizes with eagerness every such opportunity as it arises. In this respect, however, the children of this world are wiser in their generation

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than the children of light. Need we remind the reader how many special opportunities of serving God, and fulfilling their high vocation are every day presented to believers, but which they suffer to pass away unheeded and unimproved? We come into contact daily with sinners that need to be warned, backsliders that need to be rebuked, mourners that need to be consoled; and yet how frequently do we refuse to acknowledge the sacred claims they have upon us! Nay, do we not sometimes suffer even our own closest relatives and dearest friends to pass away from the present state of trial and discipline, and enter upon the solemn destinies of an unchangeable eternity, without ever once conversing with them on the ground of their eternal hopes, or pointing their souls to Him who alone can deliver them from the wrath to come? Oh! let us consider what a price we would gladly pay to enjoy again one of those days of opportunity which we have so madly neglected. How gladly would we give the wealth of worlds, if that wealth were ours, to be permitted to see again—though it were but for a single hour—those dear friends whom the ruthless hand of death has torn

from our embrace, in order that we might speak to them of the things which belong to their everlasting peace! But, alas! our opportunity of doing good is past for ever; our friends have gone to the bar of God, unsheltered by the Redeemer's righteousness, and covered with the guilt of their sins; and how far may not the blood of our friends be required at our hands?

Such are some of the ways in which we may make merchandise of time. Let me ask you, reader, whether it is thus improved by you? Are you employing it in preparing for that eternity to which it leads? Does your conscience give verdict that you are not, and that "moments, hours, have glided by, and borne no record on their wings?" Then you are squandering away upon trifles absolutely insignificant, those precious moments which God has given you to secure the salvation of your immortal soul, and are imparting to your time an influence which your eternity shall receive in bitterness and gloom.

Blessed be God, there is still room for repentance. Jesus is still inviting you to commit your eternal interests to Him as your Saviour, and to devote yourself to Him as

your Lord. Though the whole of your time may have hitherto been spent in the service of sin, yet, such is the infinitude of His love, that He is willing to receive even the chief of sinners. "Him that cometh unto me." He says, "I will in no wise cast out." But though His invitation is free, yet the time is short. "To-day," then, "if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart; for, behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Give yourself to Him: and knowing that you are not your own, but bought with His precious blood, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are His. Let the love of Christ constrain you to live no longer unto yourself, but unto Him who loved you, and gave Himself for you. Strive thus to improve the remaining days, or months, or years, that may yet be allotted to you here below; and then shall that Redeemer, in whose service they are now spent, welcome you to the enjoyment of your eternal reward.

"As the winged arrow flies
Speedily the mark to find:
As the lightning from the skies
Darts, and leaves no trace behind;

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Swiftly thus our fleeting days

Bear us down life's rapid stream;

Upward, Lord! our spirits raise!

All below is but a dream.

"Thanks for mercies past receive;
Pardon of our sins renew;
Teach us, henceforth, how to live
With eternity in view;
Bless Thy word to young and old;
Fill us with a Saviour's love;
And, when life's short tale is told,
May we dwell with Thee above!"

-JOHN NEWTON.

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun Thy daily stage of duty run; Shake off dull sloth, and joyful rise To pay thy morning sacrifice.

"Thy precious time mis-spent redeem;
Each present day thy last esteem;
Improve thy talent with due care;
For the great day thyself prepare.

-BISHOP THOMAS KEN.

# The Pilgrim.

### GEN. xlvii. q.

"And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

### Ps. xxxix. 12.

"Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."

### NUM. X. 29.

"And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

### Нев. хі. 13.

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

### 2 PET. ii. 11.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."

### 1 PET. i. 17.

"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

- "My rest is in heaven, my rest is not here;
  Then why should I murmur when trials are near?
  Be hush'd, my dark spirit! the worst that can come
  But shortens thy journey, and hastens thee home.
- "It is not for me to be seeking my bliss, And building my hopes, in a region like this; I look for a city which hands have not piled— I pant for a country by sin undefiled.
- "The thorn and the thistle around me may grow—
  I would not lie down upon roses below;
  I ask not my portion, I seek not a rest,
  Till I find them for ever in Jesus' breast.
- "Afflictions may damp, they cannot destroy; One glimpse of His love turns them all into joy; And the bitterest tears if He smile upon them, Like dew in the sunshine, grow diamond and gem,
- "Let doubt, then, and danger, my progress oppose; They only make heaven more sweet at the close; Come joy, or come sorrow—whate'er may befall, An hour with my God will make up for it all.
- "A scrip on my back, and a staff in my hand, I march on in haste through an enemy's land; The road may be rough, but it cannot be long, And I'll smooth it with hope, and cheer it with song."

-H. F. LYTE.

## THE PILGRIM.

1 CHRON. xxix. 15.

"For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers."



UCH was the confession of David, even when, amidst the height of his kingly triumph and prosperity, he poured forth his soul in solemn

and public thanksgiving to God. Even such, too, has been, and ever must be the acknowledgment of all believing men, whatever their earthly lot may be.

In one sense, indeed, it is true of all mankind, without exception, that here they are but strangers and sojourners. Their continuance in this world is short and uncertain; they are, as it were, on a journey, and night and day must they travel onwards, until at last they reach "the house appointed for all living." "Their days on the earth are a shadow, and there is none abiding." But the children of God are, in a sense peculiar to themselves, "strangers and sojourners before God;" and it will be our object, in the present

chapter, to show the fitness and propriety of this figurative representation.

They account themselves strangers and sojourners, because, so long as they continue in this world, they are at a distance from their native country, and their eternal home. The term stranger signifies a foreigner,—a person born in a different country from that in which he sojourns, and who is for the present at a distance from his father's house. So it is, also, with the saints, in all countries, and in every age. This world is not their native country; they are born "from above:"

## "Heaven is their fatherland, Heaven is their home."

There lies their inheritance; and there their best friends and kindred dwell,—"God the Judge of all, Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect." Thither their eyes are habitually directed; and thither are they constantly journeying. But, while this body is their home, they are a great way off from their Father's house, and cannot but feel, therefore, that this world is only a temporary place of abode, that they dwell in tabernacles which shall soon be

taken down, and that not until the journey of life is finished, will the desires of their souls be fully satisfied.

This figurative representation of the children of God, intimates that, in the present world, they must lay their account with many hardships and inconveniences. are strangers in a strange land; they are at present in a state of pilgrimage; and, therefore, it would be unreasonable in them to expect that their heavenly Father will give them the same entertainment on the journey which He has pledged Himself to give them at the journey's end. It is their lot, as men, to be born to trouble, and the same distresses and misfortunes which others suffer are laid upon them. Besides all this, they are often exposed to a variety of distresses and afflictions, which the men of the world can neither know nor feel. They are treated as strangers by the people of the country through which they are passing. "Ye know," said Christ to His disciples, "that the world hated you before it hated me. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

Such treatment, however, is one of the best evidences that the people of God belong to another and a better country. It is but a means which their heavenly Father employs to stimulate them to arise and depart to a place of undisturbed and unpolluted rest. Let us not, then, repine or murmur at the inconveniences and troubles of the way, but endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, remembering that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The people of God are strangers and sojourners, because they are distinguished by a peculiar mode of conduct. Though in the world, they show that they are not of it. Instead of conforming to its pleasures, its fashions, and its follies, their whole conduct proves that they belong to a better country. A man who loves his country, will, when travelling in a foreign land, be solicitous so to conduct himself, as to impart to those among whom he sojourns, a favourable impression of the land of his nativity. Accordingly, the spiritual sojourner ought to "walk in wisdom towards them that are with-

out," and to "show forth the praises of Him who hath called him out of darkness into His marvellous light." In his habits of thinking, feeling, and acting, it behoves him to be distinct from the men of the world: and though he ought not to affect an unnecessary singularity, yet must he openly and fearlessly avow his religious principles without hesitation or compromise. In this way, others may be led to inquire after his country and his kindred, and, in the end, to glorify his Father who is in heaven. "Dearly beloved," saith the apostle Peter, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

As pilgrims and sojourners, the children of God set their affections on things above. As the heart of the true patriot is not in the land of his travels, whatever may be its beauty and attractions, but in that of his kindred, his inheritance, and his home, so the believer's best affections are placed not

on earthly objects, but on heavenly. treasure is in heaven; there, therefore, is his heart also. Witness the children of Israel in Babylon. Did they, when exiles in that strange land, forget the land of their nativity? No: Ierusalem was never so dear to them as then. Listen to their mournful plaint: "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion; we hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Thus their hearts were in Jerusalem, though they sojourned in Babylon. Even so should we feel in reference to the Jerusalem that is above. While yet on earth, our whole hearts should be bound to the land of our better birth.

This figurative representation implies that heaven will be our everlasting dwelling-place. However long we may be on our journey, however rugged may be the path we have to travel, and however unkind and inhospitable the treatment we may experience at the hands of those among whom we at present sojourn, we shall at length arrive at the end, and find that end unspeakably glorious.

Death, which terminates our pilgrimage, is the golden gate that opens on eternity. Then shall we return home to our Father's house, when all the toils and hardships of the way will be forgotten, or remembered only to swell the song, in which our gratitude will seek its utterance for ever. "In my Father's house," said Jesus, "are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

Seek then, dear reader, to cherish the feeling, and to maintain the confession, that you are a stranger and a sojourner before God. Show that you are of another spirit from the men of this world. Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted. Bid adieu to the vanities of this present world, and break asunder the ties which have hitherto held you in bondage to its vain conversation. Pass through it as one who is travelling to another and a better country. And let the hope of that better land animate and uphold you during the remainder of your earthly journey. Every step you take is

bringing you nearer to it. Ere long, the towers of the celestial city will glitter in your view: the melodies of its blest inhabitants will fall upon your delighted ears; and you will mingle your loud hosannas with those of the ransomed of the Lord who have gone before you into that world of light. What though you may yet have to cross many a mountain, to traverse many a valley, and encounter many a foe? There is One by your side, whose omnipotent arm will be your unfailing support. Nay, when you reach the Jordan of death, you need fear no evil; for the foot of your High Priest will divide the stream, and enable you to pass over in safety; and then, having reached the mount of God, and seen the King in His beauty, you will for ever rejoice in the thought, that you are no more a stranger and a sojourner. but have at last reached your rest, and entered your everlasting home.

"A pilgrim here I wander,
On earth have no abode;
My fatherland is yonder,
My home is with my God.
For here I journey to and fro;
There in eternal rest
Will God His gracious gift bestow
On all the toil-oppress'd.

"Where now my spirit stayeth
Is not her true abode,
This earthly house decayeth,
And she will drop its load,
When comes the hour to leave beneath
What now I use and have;
And when I've yielded up my breath
Earth gives me but a grave.

"But Thou, my Joy and Gladness,
O Thou, my Life and Light,
Wilt raise me from this sadness,
This long tempestuous night,
Into the perfect gladsome day,
Where bathed in joy divine,
Among Thy saints, and bright as they,
I too shall ever shine.

"There shall I dwell for ever,
Not as a guest alone,
With those who cease there never
To worship at Thy throne;
There in my heritage I rest,
From baser things set free,
And join the chorus of the blest
For ever, Lord, to Thee!"
—PAUL GERHARDT.

"Heavenward doth our journey tend,
We are strangers here on earth,
Through the wilderness we wend
Towards the Canaan of our birth.
Here we roam a pilgrim band,
Yonder is our native land.

- "Heavenward stretch, my soul, thy wings,
  Heavenly nature canst thou claim,
  There is nought of earthly things
  Worthy to be all thine aim;
  Every soul that God inspires,
  Back to Him, its Source, aspires.
- "Heavenward! Faith discerns the prize
  That is waiting us afar,
  And my heart would swiftly rise
  High o'er sun and moon and star,
  To that Light behind the veil,
  Where all earthly splendours pale.
- "Heavenward Death shall lead at last,
  To the home where I would be,
  All my sorrows overpast,
  I shall triumph there with Thee,
  Jesus, who hast gone before,
  That we too might Heavenward soar
- " Heavenward! Heavenward! only this
  Is my watchword on the earth;
  For the love of heavenly bliss
  Counting all things little worth.
  Heavenward all my being tends,
  Till in heaven my journey ends."

-SCHMOLCK.

# The Runner.

#### I COR. ix. 24.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain."

## 1 COR. ix. 26, 27.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

#### GAL. V. 71

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?"

#### PHILIP. ii. 16.

"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

#### 2 TIM. ii. 5.

"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."

- "Awake, my soul, stretch ev'ry nerve, And press with vigour on; A heavenly race demands thy zeal, And an immortal crown.
- "A crowd of witnesses around Holds thee in full survey; Forget the steps already trod, And onward urge thy way.
- "Tis God's all-animating voice
  That calls thee from on high;
  Tis He presents the glorious prize
  To thine aspiring eye.
- "The joys and pleasures of a day I cheerfully resign, Rich in the large immortal store Secured by grace divine.
- "Let fools my happy choice deride:—
  Angels and God approve;
  Nor scorn of men, nor rage of hell,
  My steadfast soul shall move.
- "With ardent eye thy bright reward I daily will survey, And in the blooming prospect lose The sorrows of the way.
- "Bless'd Saviour! through Thy grace alone
  Have we our race begun;
  And crown'd with vict'ry, at Thy feet
  We'll lay our honours down."

  —PHILLE DODDRIDGE.

## THE RUNNER.

### HEB. xii. z.

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."



HE language of the apostle in the above-quoted passage, was obviously borrowed from the "sacred games," which were wont to be

relebrated by the ancient Greeks, with so much solemnity and pomp, in honour of their gods, and deified heroes. Of these there were several, styled respectively, the Olympic, the Pythian, the Nemean, and the Isthmian, which differed from each other chiefly by the places where they were celebrated, the ceremonies and exercises in each being nearly the same. The first, or Olympic, were the most renowned, and a prize obtained at them was considered as the highest of all honours. These games were celebrated every five years at Olympia, in Elis, on the west side of the Peloponnesus. Amongst other exercises there

practised, that of the foot-race was held in high estimation. It was performed upon a piece of ground, called the stadium, measuring one hundred and twenty-five paces, in the middle of which was placed, in a conspicuous position, a chaplet made of wild olive. with which the victors were crowned, together with palm branches, one of which was given into the hands of each of them, at the same time with the chaplet. As these ensigns of victory were esteemed the most honourable of all earthly distinctions, the competitors employed all their ability, and displayed the most intense eagerness to obtain them. The nearer, too, that they approached the goal, the more earnestly did they strive to outstrip each other.

To these competitors in the foot-race the apostle compares himself, and other followers of Christ; and the fitness and propriety of this image will appear, when we consider the representation which he here gives of the nature of the duty enjoined, of the manner in which it is to be performed, and of the animating motive by which it is enforced.

The duty here enjoined is that of running a race. This figure affords an apt illustration

of the Christian life. In the ancient footrace. there was a certain prescribed course, over which the competitors had to run, and from which they were, on no account, to deviate. Even so, in the life of faith, there is a particular course marked out for us by God himself. We are not left at liberty to choose a path for ourselves, without any regard to His will, but must confine ourselves to the "narrow way" of holiness, which He hath "set before us." To this it behoves us strictly and constantly to adhere, "neither turning aside to the right hand, nor to the left." In that game to which we allude, the most strenuous exertion was put forth by the competitors to gain the prize. So, in the life of faith, "whatsoever our hands find to do, we must do it with all our might." "Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before," we must "press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In those games, particular rules were laid down for the observance of all the competitors, in allusion to which the apostle elsewhere says, "If a man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." So, in the Chris-

tian race, there is a code of spiritual laws, to which it is indispensably necessary for us to conform, if we would have the prize adjudged to us. One rule in particular may be mentioned, inasmuch as it is expressly specified by the apostle, and virtually includes all others. It is, that we must ever "look unto Iesus," as our successful pattern, and as our almighty friend, "as the Author and the Finisher of our faith." The ancient foot-race was witnessed by an immense assemblage of spectators gathered from all the then known regions of the globe. Men of all ranks and conditions of life stood by, encouraging the various competitors to put forth every power and to strain every muscle, and greeting them with the loudest acclamations of joy, when they reached the goal. So, too, in the Christian race, we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. Numberless spectators are looking down upon us, who watch our exertions and exult in our success. At the conclusion of the ancient foot-race, the successful competitor, having been summoned by proclamation, was crowned with the wreath of victory and conducted along the stadium, amid the loud plaudits of the

assembled multitude. In like manner, when the believer has finished his course on earth, He who now presides over us, seated at the place of judgment, by the goal, will bestow upon him the reward which He has prepared and promised. The crown of life and glory shall be placed upon his head, in the presence of an assembled universe.

It is necessary, however, to observe that, between the Christian race, and the foot-race in the public games so famous in Greece, several important differences obtain. In the latter case, although all the competitors started with equal advantages, and had the same incentives to exertion, only one was rewarded with the chaplet of victory. Hence saith the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, "Know ye not, that they which run in a race, run all; but one receiveth the prize." But it is quite otherwise in the Christian race. There, all who run, obtain. Let the number be ever so great, yet none of them who strive and hold out to the end will be put to shame; all will be rewarded with the crown of triumph. In the ancient foot-race, the fall of one competitor gave joy to the rest, and many were disappointed when one secured the prize. But, in the Christian race, the success of one increases the happiness of all. There, the stronger help the weaker forward in their course, and each rejoices in his neighbour's success. There, there is emulation without envy, and triumph without disappointment. In the former, the prize, when obtained, was fading and worthless. It was simply a wreath of olive, of laurel, of pine leaves, or of parsley, in order that the competitors might be stimulated solely by hopes of fame and glory, which, indeed, invariably attended those who were victorious. But the wreath, with which the Christian victor's temples shall be crowned, is no fading prize, no withering meed. "Inwove with amaranth and gold," it shall flourish in immortal verdure, and increase in beauty and brightness as eternal ages roll on.

As to the manner, in which the Christian race is to be run, the apostle exhorts us to "lay aside every weight." The racer in the public games was wont to strip himself, before starting, of all superfluous clothing, and disencumber himself of everything that might impede his movements. In like manner, we

are required to divest ourselves of whatever would obstruct or retard our progress in the Christian life. What the apostle here chiefly refers to as weights, are doubtless the riches, the honours, and the pleasures of this world. These, when they unduly engross our attention, may be considered as so many encumbrances, which must necessarily so molest and entangle us as to unfit us for the service of God, to weigh down our spirits, and to exhaust our strength. Yet how many are there who are so entangled with the affairs of this life, that they can scarcely move under the load with which they are burdened. cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and they become unfruitful." But if we would run successfully the race that is set before us, we must endeavour to lay aside every weight, conscious that all undue attachment to the world, and the things of the world, must have a pernicious influence upon our progress heavenward, and, if suffered to increase, will endanger our ultimate safety.

Another encumbrance, which we are to lay aside, in running the Christian race, is "the sin which doth so easily beset us," that is, the

sin to which, from the peculiarities of our constitution or circumstances, we are most prone. This, according to the apostle's description of it, seems to resemble a long flowing robe. which if worn by the competitor in the footrace, would not only check his speed but even occasion his fall. With this sin thus encompassing us, we cannot, it is evident, run successfully the race set before us. We must, therefore, lay it aside. What this sin is, it behoves us carefully to inquire: we must examine in what point our character is most vulnerable, and in what part of our moral constitution the moral poison takes most immediate effect. Whatever it may be found to be, it must be sacrificed, if we would so run as to obtain the prize. The command of Christ is peremptory. "If thy right eve offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

We are further exhorted to run the race set before us, with patience. The word here rendered patience may more properly be translated sustained effort, or perseverance. It refers, not so much to enduring, without murmuring, the obstacles, which we may encounter in our progress, as to holding on steadily and perseveringly until the goal is reached. This, also, is absolutely essential. To run with speed over a part of the stadium would avail the racer nothing; the whole course had to be passed over, otherwise, he would have run in vain. And even thus it must be with the candidate for the wreath of immortal glory. The race he has to run is a constant progressive movement, commensurate with his life. If he stops at any point short of the final goal, he must inevitably meet with disappointment, and find his labour lost. Yet, how lamentable is the thought that there are multitudes who seem to start and to hold on for a season in the Christian race. who, notwithstanding by and by turn aside after Satan, loving the world, and perish for Their goodness, like the morning ever. cloud and the early dew, quickly passes away. To such persons it may well be said, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?" Their situation is peculiarly awful. For, "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it to turn from the holy commandment which

has been delivered unto them." For such sinning wilfully "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation." Let us never forget that we must endure unto the end, if ever we would be saved, and that it is unto them only, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, that there is promised eternal life. The words of promise are, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Never then let us turn back, but let our motto be, "onwards and upwards." Let our path be "as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." "Girding up the loins of our mind, being sober, and hoping to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ," let us be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know, that our labour is not in vain in the Lord."

It only now remains that we consider the animating motive stated by the apostle, in order to incite us to strenuous effort and untiring perseverance in running our Christian race. "Wherefore," he declares, "seeing we

also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses." The witnesses of whom he speaks are evidently the patriarchs and prophets, and Old Testament saints whose triumphs are commemorated in the preceding chapter. These having run the race, and reached the goal, and obtained the incorruptible crown, are represented by him as spectators, overlooking the Christian course, and watching us with intense interest as we run our heavenward race. And if, in the Grecian games, the immense multitude of onlookers, were, to those who "strove for the mastery," a powerful incentive to exertion,. surely the consideration of that glorious company who are now looking down upon us, who are eagerly longing for our success, and who shall at length welcome us with joy to their blest society, may well animate us to press onward to perfection. We, too, like them, may obtain the prize. We endure no trials to which they were not exposed, and we possess the same means of resistance and of The grace that saved them is equally sufficient to save us, and is as ready to be extended to us as it was to them. And now their race is run, and they have bid an

everlasting adieu to all the fatigues and hardships of their earthly course. They are surrounding the throne of God, with crowns of glory on their heads, and palms of victory in their hands, singing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb. Animated by this glorious prospect, be it yours, reader, to encounter with courage the difficulties of your course; press on with ever-increasing ardour toward the mark for the prize of your high calling: and let nothing ever seduce you from your steadfastness. Thus, when the hour of your departure is at hand, shall you be enabled to say with St Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

> "Who would make the prize his own, Runs as swiftly as he can; Who would gain an earthly crown, Strives in earnest as a man; Trains himself betimes with care For the conflict he would share, Casts aside whate'er could be Hindrance to his victory.

"Lord, Thou biddest me aspire To a prize so high, so grand, That it sets my soul on fire To be found amidst Thy band: Oh how brightly shineth down From Thy heights the starry crown, And the throne to victors given. Who for thee have bravely striven!

"Yet it seems I strive in vain, Lord, in pity look on me, Thou my weakness must sustain, Let me now from all things flee That would keep me from my goal; Come, Thyself prepare my soul, Give me joy and strength and life, Help me in the race, the strife.

"Well our utmost efforts worth Is the crown I see afar. Though the blinded sons of earth Care not for our holy war; An exceeding great reward Is that crown of grace, my Lord; Be Thyself my Strength divine, And the prize shall soon be mine."

-J. MENTZER.

"Omnipotence is on your side, And Wisdom watches o'er your heads, And God himself will be your guide, So ye but follow where He leads; How many, guided by His hand, Have reached ere now their fatherland! Press on !

" Nor let the body dull the soul, Its weakness, fears, and sloth despise; Man toils and roams from pole to pole To gain some earthly, fleeting prize; The Highest Good he little cares To win, or striving, soon despairs.

Press on !

"Oh, help each other! hasten on, Behold the goal is nigh at hand; The battle-field shall soon be won, Your King shall soon before you stand! To calmest rest He leads you now, And sets His crown upon your brow! Press on !"

-LEHR.

(Translated by CATHERINE WINKWORTH.)

# The Conqueror, the Hidden Manna, and the Mhite Stone.

#### 2 CHRON. XV. 7.

"Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded."

#### Ps. xxv. 14.

"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant."

#### Rom. viii. 33, 34.

"Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

#### EPH. vi. 10-13.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."

#### Rev. xxi. 7

"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." "Hark, 'tis a martial sound!
To arms, ye saints, to arms!
Your foes are gathering round,
And peace has lost its charms:
Prepare the helmet, sword, and shield;
The trumpet calls you to the field.

"No common foes appear
To dare you to the fight,
But such as own no fear
And glory in their might:
The Powers of Darkness are at hand;
Resist or bow to their command.

"An arm of flesh must fail
In such a strife as this;
He only can prevail
Whose arm immortal is.
"Tis Heaven itself the strength must yield,
And weapons fit for such a field.

"And Heaven supplies them too:
The Lord, who never faints,
Is greater than the foe,
And He is with His saints;
Thus arm'd, they venture to the fight;
Thus arm'd, they put their foes to flight,

"And when the conflict's past,
On yonder peaceful shore
They shall repose at last,
And see their foes no more;
The fruits of victory enjoy,
And never more their arms employ."
—THOMAS KELLY.

# THE CONQUEROR, THE HIDDEN MANNA, AND THE WHITE STONE.

Rev. ii. 17.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."



F all the similitudes employed in Scripture to illustrate the spiritual life, none is more frequent and expressive than that of a warfare.

The believer is represented as a soldier, furnished with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. He is called to fight the good fight of faith, not entangling himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And consonant to these representations he is described, in the beautiful promise placed at the head of this chapter, as a conqueror, upon whom, at the close of his contest, shall be conferred a gracious and rich reward.

# 146 THE CONQUEROR, ETC.

He is spoken of as one that overcometh. an expression which manifestly implies that, in the prosecution of his course, he has enemies assailing him. These are numerous and powerful. He "wrestles not against flesh and blood "only, but "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." True it is, that the influence of these foes is unseen, unfelt, unheard, but this only renders it the more dangerous, and calls for the greater vigilance and circumspection. The world, too, both by its frowns and by its smiles, is continually opposing him. It presents to him innumerable inducements to acts of positive and obvious sin, while its general tendency is to infuse into his mind an undue love of the things which are seen and temporal-a secularised and worldly spirit, which cannot be indulged in without guilt, and must necessarily retard his spiritual advancement. And what renders these external foes still more formidable is, that they are aided by his own inward depravity,-the "law in his members which wars against the law of his mind, and brings him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members." It is this, that gives strength to every temptation, and renders him an easy prey to the spiritual adversaries who surround him on every hand.

This figurative representation of the Christian also intimates, that he resists and conquers his enemies. It describes him, not as fleeing from them, or yielding himself up into their hands, but as setting himself resolutely against them. And unless this be the habit of our lives, we have too much reason to fear, that our profession of the gospel is a mere name, and that vain are all our hopes of the victor's reward. The very life of the Christian is that of exertion; and, if he gain heaven at all, he must from the moment he enlists under Christ's banner, be prepared to make the remainder of his existence on earth one continued scene of watchfulness and conflict. When, therefore, Satan, the world, or the flesh, would entice him to depart from the living God, instead of complying with their solicitations, he manfully resists them, being steadfast in the faith. And not only so. In the strength of the Lord, he gains the mastery over them. Not that his course is one of unvaried and uninterrupted conquest. Far different from this is the experience of every true soldier of the cross. seldom has he been constrained with shame and confusion of face to acknowledge, that in consequence of his own weakness, selfconfidence, negligence, and still-remaining depravity, the enemies of his salvation have prevailed against him. But though he fall, yet will he arise again, and return to the fight more vigilant, valiant, and determined. by the help of God, to conquer. How frequently soever he may be defeated, yet gradually. but surely, will he gain ground upon his enemies; and soon shall his struggles be exchanged for a complete and endless triumph. Left to himself, indeed, this is an achievement which he never could effect. All would be discomfiture, had he no other resources than his own powers. But he goes not a warfare at his own charges. His sufficiency is of God, who covers his head in the day of battle, and who teaches his hands to war, and his fingers to fight. And, therefore, how painful and protracted soever may be the conflict, the victory will most assuredly be his in the end. For, hear the holy challenge of the apostle,-" If God be for us, who can be against us?"

To him that overcometh there is, first, a promise of "the hidden manna." In this expression, there is evidently an allusion to the miraculous provision made for the Israelites, during their forty years' sojourn in the wilderness, respecting which Moses said unto them,-" This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat." Of this bread, a portion was deposited in a golden pot, and kept in the Holy of holies, within, or near the ark of the covenant, as a memorial to succeeding generations, of the wonderful manner in which the goodness of God had been shown to their fathers, when He brought them forth from the land of Egypt and preserved them until they came unto the borders of the Land of Canaan. Now the manna was a prefigurative representation of our Lord Jesus Christ, (John vi. 31-35; I Cor. x. 3.) The promise before us, therefore, implies, that what the manna was to the Israelites, that Christ will be to His overcoming people—the source of their spiritual nourishment and strength. Here, indeed, the mystical bread by which they are sustained, is "hidden." It is laid up within the true Holy of holies-kept secret from every mortal eye. But hereafter, they shall see Jesus as He is. Here, they ofttimes lament, that by reason of the weakness of their faith, they can experience so little of the sweetness and excellence of this living bread. But hereafter, faith having given place to sight, they shall be perfectly blessed with the full enjoyment of it to all eternity.

To him that overcometh Christ promises also "a white stone." Reference is here made to a custom which prevailed in ancient courts of judicature. When a person underwent his trial for any offence, the judges gave their verdict by casting a black stone into an urn, if they condemned him, or by throwing in a white one, in the event of his acquittal. The promise, therefore, "I will give him a white stone," signifies, that when the believer shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, he shall not be condemned with the wicked, but be acquitted—declared free from all guilt—in presence of an assembled universe. His spiritual adversaries may seek occasion to accuse him and lay much evil to his charge; but, when "his inquities shall be sought for, they shall not be found." The white stone of acquittal shall be put into his hands by Him that sitteth upon the throne, and be, to all eternity, an evidence of his forgiveness, and an assurance that he shall never be liable to condemnation any more.

But there is yet another promise made to the conquering Christian. "And in the stone, a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." Allusion is here made to another ancient custom. It was usual for kings and princes to change the names of those who held office under them, particularly when they first attracted their notice, and were taken into their employment, and when subsequently they were elevated to some new station, and crowned with additional honours. Thus Pharaoh changed the name of Joseph, when he set him over his house, and gave him authority over all his people. Thus, too, the names of the three Hebrew youths were changed, when they were received into the house of Nebuchadnezzar. Hence the new name, which Jesus promises to give to His victorious servants, implies that He will receive them into His family, and confer upon them all the privileges of His children. By nature, they are all children of disobedience, and of wrath, but,

through the merits of Christ, they are reconciled to God, and obtain a name and a place among His children. They are no more aliens and strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. For, "as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. even to them that believe in His name." As sons, they become the objects of God's peculiar complacency and care. He imparts to them the spirit of adoption, enriches them with all spiritual benefits, preserves them from evil, admits them to delightful fellowship with Himself, and with the household of faith, and makes them heirs of His heavenly kingdom. On earth, however, these privileges of adoption are but imperfectly enjoyed. Even in their state of highest advancement, Christians are, like the Jewish believers, under a species of tutors and governors. They are, doubtless, sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, but in that relationship, they yield Him only an imperfect obedience, and, consequently, enjoy but an imperfect felicity. They are exposed to temptation, liable to backslide, and, for a season, to fall; but when the white stone of

acquittal is put into their hands, their sonship shall be consummated. Being established in the household of their heavenly Father, they shall participate fully and freely in all its unspeakably precious privileges. "He that overcometh," saith the Almighty himself, "shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he will be my son."

The fact that this new name is said to be written on the white stone of acquittal, seems to intimate, that adoption and forgiveness of sins are inseparably connected. The pardon of an earthly sovereign, though it saves the trembling malefactor from punishment leaves him, notwithstanding, without the means of comfortable subsistence, and exposed as much as ever to fresh temptation and crime. But all whom God forgives, He admits, at the same time, into His family, and advances them to share in all the honours and happiness which are the portion of His children. "Being justified by His grace, they are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

The declaration, that the new name is "known only to him that receiveth it," implies that none, but the believer, can either

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understand, or appreciate, the privileges of adoption. His life is hid with Christ in God, and a stranger intermeddleth not with his joy. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto Him, neither can He know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Such is the beautiful and expressive imagery employed to set forth the Christian conqueror's reward. The blessings which it promises are such as may well animate us to persevere in the arduous, but good and glorious. conflict of faith, to which our great Captain Up, then, O Christian, to the summons us. field—to the high places of the field. strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might, and never cease to fight till He shall have crowned your efforts with victory. Happy, thrice happy and honoured is he who overcometh. Even though his life be sacrificed in the conflict, he falls covered with glory. He triumphs, though he dies. And although no monumental tablet, storied urn, or sculptured trophy, may adorn the place where his ashes repose; yet shall he be raised to glory, honour, and immortality, in another and a better world. The everlasting gates of heaven shall be opened for his reception; he shall breathe the air of paradise, and feast upon the tree of life; the songs of angels shall celebrate his triumphs; garments of immortal beauty shall be given him to wear; the helmet, the sword, the shield, shall be exchanged for the garland, the palm, the harp of immortality; from every stain of the conflict, shall he be washed in the fountain of living waters; and, his toils and struggles at an end for ever, his God shall wipe away all tears from his eyes.

- "Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
  Onward, Christians, onward go;
  Fight the fight, and, worn with strife,
  Steep with tears the bread of life.
- "Onward, Christians, onward go;
  Join the war and face the foe;
  Faint not! much doth yet remain;
  Dreary is the long campaign.
- "Shrink not, Christians! will ye yield?
  Will ye quit the painful field?
  Will ye flee in danger's hour?
  Know ye not your Captain's power?
- "Let your drooping hearts be glad; March in heavenly armour clad; Fight, nor think the battle long; Victory soon shall tune your song.

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"Let not sorrow dim your eye, Soon shall every tear be dry: Let not woe your course impede; Great your strength, if great your need.

"Onward, then, to battle move; More than conquerors ye shall prove, Though opposed by many a foe. Christian soldiers, onward go."

H. K. WHITE.

- "O Israel, to thy tents repair: Why thus secure on hostile ground? Thy King commands thee to beware, For many foes thy camp surround.
- "The trumpet gives a martial strain: O Israel, gird thee for the fight! Arise, the combat to maintain, And put thine enemies to flight.
- "Thou shouldst not sleep, as others do; Awake, be vigilant; be brave! The coward, and the sluggard too, Must wear the fetters of the slave.
- "A nobler lot is cast for thee: A kingdom waits thee in the skies; With such a hope, shall Israel flee, Or yield, through weariness, the prize?
- "No! let a careless world repose And slumber on through life's short day, While Israel to the conflict goes, And bears the glorious prize away!" THOMAS KELLY.

"Then now at last the hour is come,
That I have long'd for many a time,
When God with joy should call me home
From this strange land, this wintry clime;
Thy victim, Death, escapes no more,
The hour draws on when I shall be
From all the bonds of earth set free,
And life's long battle shall be o'er.

"To combat for His glory here
The Father sent me forth;—and lo!
The hour of victory draws near,
And conquer'd now is every foe;
And I have borne me in the strife
As true and fearless warriors ought,
And bravely to the last have fought
Through all the wars and woes of life.

"My cry, when rough the march and dark, Was, watch and strive till thou hast won, Press forward, fearless to the mark! As now, thank God, at last I've done. Now it is o'er, I cannot miss;
Through every danger to the death True to my Lord I've kept the faith, And freely risk'd all else for this.

"It lacketh now a few short hours,
And I am in eternity;
The wreath of fadeless heavenly flowers
Is twined already there for me,—
The crown is waiting for me there,
Until the fight is wholly fought,
And all my soul is thither caught,
Where shining palms the conquerors bear.

# THE CONQUEROR, ETC.

"But when the morning shall appear,
When our great Judge, the Son of God,
Shall give to those who loved Him here
Their gracious undeserved reward,
Then in the glorious halls above,
I too among that host shall stand,
And take from His all-faithful hand
The crown of righteousness and love.

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"Nor shall I yonder stand alone,
I see the crowned hosts appear,
The mighty host before His throne,
Who shine for ever pure and clear,—
The souls of those, who on their way
Still hour by hour were longing here,
With burning, and many a tear,
To see the glories of His Day."

SPENER, (From Lyra Germanica.)

# Paradige.

#### Ps. xvi. 11.

"Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

## LUKE XXIII. 43.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

### REV. ii. 7.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradize of God."

## REV. xxii. 1-5.

"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no 'night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."

- "God in the high and holy place,
  Looks down upon the spheres:
  Yet in His providence and grace,
  To every eye appears.
- "He bows the heavens,—the mountains stand A highway for their God: He walks amidst the desert land, 'Tis Eden where He trod.
- "The forests in His strength rejoice; Hark! on the evening breeze, As once of old, the Lord God's voice Is heard among the trees.
- "In every stream His bounty flows, Diffusing joy and wealth; In every breeze His Spirit blows The breath of life and health.
- "His blessings fall in plenteous showers
  Upon the lap of earth,
  That teems with foliage, fruit and flowers,
  And rings with infant mirth.
- "If God hath made this world so fair, Where sin and death abound; How beautiful beyond compare Will paradise be found."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

## PARADISE.

2 COR. xii. 4.

"How that he was caught up into paradiss, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."



N the above quotation, St Paul compares the third heaven to a paradise, or enclosed park or garden,

in obvious allusion to the abode of our first parents in their state of innocence. Although there are many particulars regarding that primitive abode, which are involved in great obscurity, yet, from the concise account which Moses has left of it, and the numerous references and allusions to it to be found in other parts of Scripture, it will be found, that, in several leading and distinguishing features, it was peculiarly fitted to afford a most beautiful and appropriate picture, or similitude, of the eternal abode of the righteous.

The celestial, like the earthly paradise, is a region of delightful enjoyment. The garden of Eden, as its name imports, was the centre of every terrestrial pleasure. It was the love-

liest spot in a world, that had known as yet no curse, and that was still adorned with its original glory. By the bounty of the Creator, it was richly replenished with everything that was fitted to regale the senses, and delight the contemplative mind. "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden." Even so, with respect to the paradise above, we are assured, that it is "a land of pure delight." In the fair climes of that celestial country, there is reproduced, in an infinitely more attractive rendering, all that was fitted to charm the eye and ravish the soul in the garden planted by God in Eden. In the immediate presence of the Creator "is fulness of joy," and at His right hand " are pleasures for evermore." There, the saints "hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither doth the sun light on them nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne feeds them, and leads them unto living fountains of waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes." There, they drink refreshment from the fountains of joy, and eat unforbidden of the tree of life, now guarded no longer by the cherubim and flaming sword. but holding forth its golden fruits to be freely gathered by all "And he showed me," saith the beloved disciple, who beheld in vision that blessed abode, "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the Tree of Life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the Tree were for the healing of the nations."

The heavenly, like the earthly paradise, is a scene of active service. The garden of Eden was a place of employment, which combined in it work without toil, and effort without fatigue. "The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it." Thus, even in his original state of innocence, and when surrounded by so many external sources of happiness, man was not to pass his time in indo-

lent repose. By the very constitution of his nature, employment of some kind was absolutely essential to him; and, had he remained in innocence, though he would not have been compelled, as he now is, to labour in toil and sorrow, and," in the sweat of his face to eat bread," he would nevertheless have been cheerfully, actively, and usefully employed in the cultivation of the various fruits of the ground which might be necessary for his subsistence, or tend to beautify still further the paradise of pleasure in which he was placed. It will doubtless be so, too, in the paradise above. Though a state of rest from toil and fatigue, we are by no means to imagine it a place of indolent contemplation or inglorious ease. It is a scene characterised by unceasing and unwearied activity. There, the saints are as the angels of God, that excel in strength, and who not only know, but do His pleasure. "They are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple." What this service will consist in, we know not, but, unquestionably, that activity, which is a native and original principle of the soul, will find in heaven ample and constant scope for its exercise. Were it otherwise, it would, to the Christian, be a place of misery, rather than a garden of de-On earth, he is soon wearied and worn out with his labours in the cause of that Master, whom, though now he sees Him not, he loves; and the spirit is often willing, when the flesh is weak. While in this tabernacle, he often groans, being burdened. And, therefore, he looks forward to heaven, as a place of ceaseless energy and exertion, where there shall be no need of relaxation or refreshment, and where, freed from every encumbering weight, he shall serve God without weariness or distraction, and where, with the angels, those ministers of His presence. He shall fly on the swift wings of obedient love to fulfil His high behests.

The heavenly, like the earthly paradise, is a temple of blissful communion, of holy fellowship between man and God. The garden of Eden, like the Temple under the law, and the Church under the gospel, was a place chosen for the residence and appearance of the Most High, "a place designed to represent and furnish our first parents with ideas of heavenly things, a place sacred to contemplation and devotion. There, they walked

with God, as a man walketh with his friend. and enjoyed sweet intercourse with heaven. though their abode was upon earth." So, in the upper sanctuary, the saints shall enjoy the blessed presence of God and the Lamb. "As for me," says the Psalmist, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." "Where I am," saith Christ, "there shall also my servant be." And in his apocalyptic vision, the apostle declares,-" The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb, are the temple of the heavenly city. The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face." At present, we can form but an inadequate idea of the nature of that spiritual manifestation of the Divine presence, which the redeemed shall be privileged to enjoy in the world of glory and of blessedness. we walk by faith, and not by sight. delightful and improving soever our present communion with God may be, it is, in many

respects, imperfect. It is not immediate and sensible, and is liable to many interruptions. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." And how ineffable must be the joy that will fill and overflow the soul of the believer, when he shall behold the face of God without any interposing veil, when his communion with Him shall be immediate, sensible, unbroken, and perfect, and when he shall enjoy the manifestation of the Saviour's love, without impediment or interruption, and without the fear of any change to impair his fruition of a happiness so transcendent! "Blessed," surely then, " are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures; for with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light, shall we see light."

Such are the leading and most remarkable points of resemblance between the celestial and the earthly paradise. But we cannot leave the illustration of this subject, without remarking how defective an emblem the latter is of the former. The brightest and fairest region in this lower world; all that eye hath

seen, or poetry hath painted, of overpowering splendour and transporting loveliness, can present but a faint and dim reflection of the glories of the celestial paradise. The earthly Eden was open to the entrance of a malignant, and too successful tempter. But nothing that defileth shall ever enter into the heavenly; no taint ever be suffered to touch the purity of its holiness, or of its joy. There, no enemy shall ever assail. "Violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; and thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise." From the earthly Eden our first parents were, in consequence of their transgression, expelled by God; and oh! what human tongue can fully or fittingly express the sadness which must have overshadowed their minds, when they thought of what its loss implied, and of the toil, and sorrow, and death, that they were doomed to suffer beyond its precincts? With tears they looked back on the happy seat so lately theirs, and

But those, who once enter the blissful

<sup>&</sup>quot;Hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow, Through Eden took their solitary way."

bowers of the heavenly Eden, "shall go no more out." There, there is no fear of expulsion or of banishment. "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." All the joys of that bloodbought paradise are eternal, and "an eternity of bliss is bliss indeed." The slightest foreboding that these joys would one day terminate, would mingle waters of bitterness with the water of life, and throw a cloud over the sunshine of that nightless world.

"That ghastly thought would drink up all the joy."

Blessed be God, however, the felicity of that better land, is as *lasting*, as it is *great*. For "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs, and *everlasting* joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

"Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green,
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As no where else are seen.
"Quite through the streets, with silver sound
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of life doth grow.

"There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

"Jerusalem my happy home,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see"

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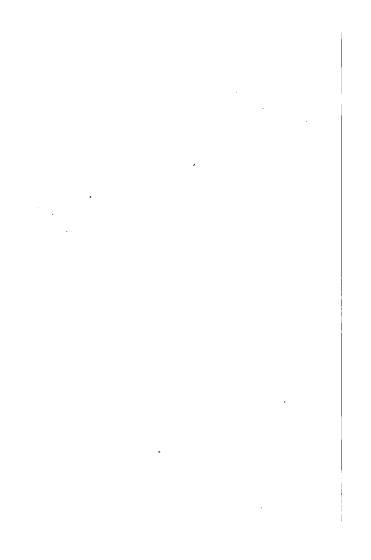
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